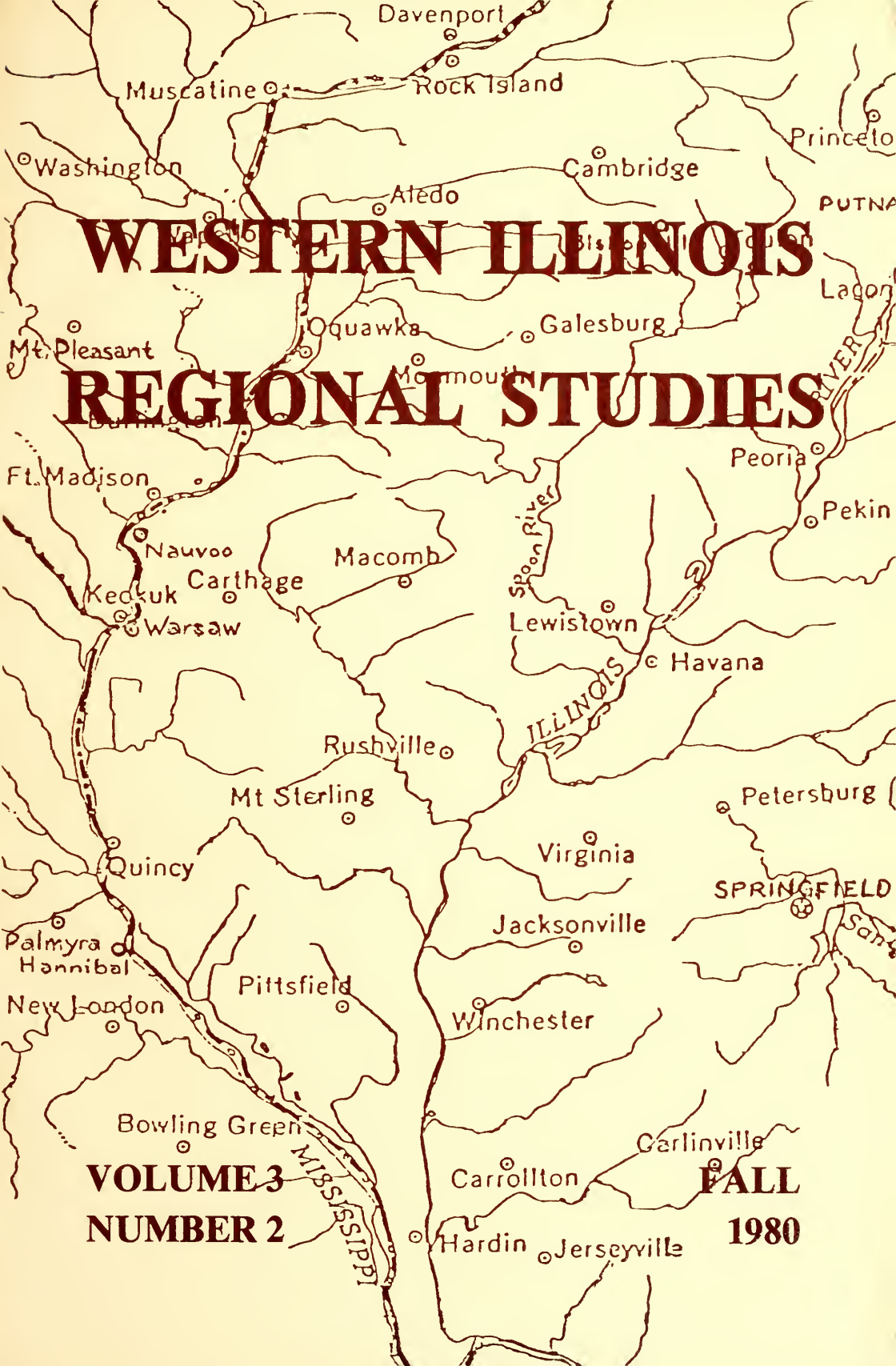

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PRIMITIVISM AND PATERNALISM: EARLY DENOMINATIONAL APPROACHES IN WESTERN ILLINOIS

Myron J. Fogde

A common interpretation of American religious history views our pluralistic denominational pattern as having been imported from Europe, particularly the British Isles, and then having been adapted to the American environment.[1] Accenting the effect of this environment on the centuries-old European religious traditions is the following observation: "It is not too much to say that in America space has played the part that time has played in the older cultures of the world," so that "the story of America is the story of uprooted emigrant and immigrant people ever moving rapidly onward through space so vast that space came to take precedence over time in the formation of their most cherished ideals."[2] By the time Christian pioneers reached the banks of the Mississippi River, a great deal of space was already behind them.

It is the thesis of this essay that an appropriate method of interpreting the arrival and early development of Christianity in Western Illinois is to investigate incoming denominational attitudes toward this area and determine how this affected the exposition of the faith. Supporting this approach is a recent upsurge in the study of regionalism as an appropriate context in which to seek an understanding of the American religious experience.[3] Aiding this endeavor is the fact that Western Illinois is in the middle of a region with a distinctive denominational pattern, characterized by no one dominant form of Christianity, but the presence in significant numbers of major Christian groups. This region extends from the Ohio-Pennsylvania border westward, primarily north of the Ohio River to the Mississippi River and then onward to the Nebraska sandhills.

Vividly portraying the urgency with which denominations entered this area is the statement of Lyman Beecher in a missionary tract entitled *Plea for the West,* published in Cincinnati in 1836:

> It is plain, that the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West. There is the territory, and there will soon be the population, the wealth, and the political power. The Atlantic commerce and manufactures may confer always some peculiar advantage on the

> East. But the West is destined to be the great central power of the nation, and under heaven, must affect powerfully the cause of free institutions, and the liberty of the world.[4]

Though the intent of this tract was strongly influenced by Beecher's anti-Catholicism, it also served as a general stimulus to Protestant extension beyond the Appalachians. Stating this just as strongly, but without the anti-Catholic bias, was Bishop Philander Chase of the Illinois Diocese of the Episcopal Church. He wrote the following passage from Stephenson (Rock Island) on July 17, 1837, while on his first episcopal journey in Illinois:

> Let pass a few years, and all the busy, bustling first settlers of these beautiful places will be in their graves. And what will be the character and destiny of those who occupy their places, if nothing more be done than now appears, to form their manners and their hearts anew? O, let all true philanthropists remember that the Christian religion, the fountain of all hope for a happy immortality, is not, like the corruption of our nature, hereditary. It must be commenced anew in every heart. The links of the moral chain that connects it from father to child must not be suffered to rust, or be broken, for even one generation. On the contrary, they must be preserved by constant care, and be kept bright by unwearied exercise; or all will be lost, and our whole country will relapse into pagan error.[5]

Two primary attitudes were expressed by the several denominations who consequently became active in this region in the nineteenth century: primitivism and paternalism. These attitudes provide a useful typology for understanding the role of religion in the development of all of nineteenth and twentieth-century America, but the focus of this essay will be limited to Western Illinois and the adjacent west bank of the Mississippi River.

I

The primitivist point of view saw the area as a potential Garden of Eden, wherein men and women could start anew. In breaking off old roots, they could quickly put down new ones in the virgin, fertile soil, roots no longer encrusted in the ways and traditions of the past. People could leave their past behind and bring with them only a few necessities on the flatboats, in the prairie schooners, or by railroad. It would truly be a new beginning in a virgin land. Purveyors of this romantic view seemingly did not suffer from heat and high humidity in the summer, or frostbite in the winter. They did not feel the bite of the mosquito, or inhale the smoke of a prairie fire. Neither clearing stumps, nor breaking prairie sod could keep them from their utopian dream that here was a land still fresh from the Creator's hand.

Because the West was unspoiled by civilized life, such religionists hoped it would be possible to eliminate the historical accretions which had culturized and corrupted Christianity in Europe and

which had been continued with some adaptation on the East Coast. With Christianity freed from such distortions, the New Jerusalem would appear. One group, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons), insisted that this holy city would be built at Independence, Missouri.

Expressive of this primitive renewal is the denomination known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which was initially formed in the Kentucky wilderness in the first decades of the nineteenth century, with its most noted developers being Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Referring to the movement as the "Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things," their motto became:

> Where the Bible speaks, we speak:
> Where the Bible is silent, we are silent.[6]

In a new land, the Campbells thought free people with the unadorned Word of God and the immediate presence of the Spirit could study and live the life of the New Testament era. In so doing they would recapture the purity and enthusiasm of the primitive Christian community. To such people, that earlier time was the Golden Era of Christianity, and it could be reconstructed in this region. Most of the pioneer preachers were men who felt they were sent by God and who were self-supporting in their endeavors. Expressive of the confidence of these men was one of their periodicals, *The Millenial Harbinger.*

This concerted effort to reproduce Christianity by a faithful reconstruction of the religious community described in the pages of the New Testament was abetted by somewhat similar movements, one of which was spearheaded by Barton W. Stone, who arrived in the Jacksonville area in 1832 and who died there in 1844. These groups entered Illinois at the time it became a state, and by the 1830's individual congregations began to merge these similar streams of Biblical Christianity into a single group, with the "Campbellite" influence the stronger.

One of the earliest congregations to be established was the Antioch (Cantrall) Church, organized on May 15, 1820, in Sangamon County. Stephen England, who had known Stone in Kentucky, preached to his neighbors assembled in his home, and they signed a statement agreeing "that our constitution shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, believing them to be the only rule of faith and practice."[7] This strict Biblicism was also seen in the first church of this type organized in the Military Tract, on the Cedar Fork of the Henderson River in Warren County on April 30, 1831. As Nathaniel S. Haynes has stated, "This church was constituted upon the belief that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule of faith and practice and are sufficient for the government of the church."[8]

Mt. Pleasant Christian Church, Hancock County.

With the arrival of Stone in 1832, a rapid development of churches in Western Illinois took place, which was still evident in 1913 when a listing of Disciple congregations in the state showed Hancock and Adams counties having twenty each, a total surpassed by only three other counties in the state.[9] Aiding this growth had been the development of a state meeting, beginning in 1836, and the eventual employment of missionaries to promote the faith.

Here was a major influence in Western Illinois Christianity that was not an import from Europe, but the further extension of an expression formulated a generation earlier in Kentucky. Despising the denominational label, the Disciples wished to be the community of all the faithful, adhering to simple Biblical practices. For this they were condemned by the Methodists and Baptists as having an insufficient grasp of spiritual experience and group discipline; and in fact, they were criticized by all other denominations as being without the benefit of the human experience embodied in historical traditions. This antagonism led to frequent public debates between Disciples and spokesmen for other denominations during the nineteenth century.

A basic concern of this new group, to which anyone could submit by being immersed, was baptism. Simply by being baptized in

obedience to the command of Christ a person had fulfilled the prerequisite for admission to the fellowship of the church. Still indicative of this understanding of the primitive faith is the setting for the baptismal ceremony in the Fifteenth Avenue Christian Church of Rock Island. From the pew the observer's eye falls upon a wall painting of a Jordan River scene, which carries the attention of the viewer to the baptismal waters at the base of the painting. Witnessing a baptism, a person's mind is transported back to the first century church. Also important is the weekly recapitulation of the Lord's Supper, as this was believed to have been the practice in the early church. Accenting this as a representation of the original meal is the annual recreation based on Leonardo de Vinci's famous painting, the *Last Supper,* done by the men's club of Memorial Christian Church of Rock Island, on Maundy Thursday evening. Adhering strictly to the Biblical commands to "go and baptize" and "do this in remembrance of me," the Disciples maintain a strong devotion to the primitive church pattern, so that the Christian can in his mind go back to the first century and relive the inspiration of that time in his own life. Furthermore, this denomination that originated in the early American West has continued its determination to recall the faith expressed in the Scriptural testimony. In so doing, it intends to offer this region a form of faith that is able, without the later cultural restrictions, to nurture succeeding generations by the power of the unhindered Spirit.

Appearing in southern Illinois as early as the 1790's were the Baptists. Whereas primitivism for the Disciples of Christ was the reconstruction of the first century church in the American wilderness, for the Baptists it was also the espousal of the faith as perceived by largely uneducated people in their reading of the Scripture and their own personal experience. However, in addition, the Baptists often espoused a spiritual elitism by insisting that only the elect of God could respond to the preaching of the Gospel. Still, the Baptist congregation was structurally an expression of frontier democracy. The frequent pattern of congregational initiation was exhibited when a man possessed of the natural ability to speak would farm six days of the week, and on the seventh would invite his neighbors in and preach to them the simple Biblical truths. If the group found him inspiring, they might organize an autonomous Baptist congregation and elect the farmer-preacher as their minister. This would set in motion the machinery for self-discipline within the group, and a neighborhood Baptist church was the result.

Indicative of this pattern in Western Illinois is this brief account of the formation of the Hennipen and Granville Baptist Church: "A few Baptist brethren and sisters within the bounds of this church, about 14 in number, were gathered together and constituted in April,

Baptist missionary John Mason Peck.

1837, by elder Thomas Powell, who immediately assumed the pastoral charge of this church."[10] Similar is the story of Elder Jonathan Miner. According to Gilbert S. Bailey, Miner "removed to Illinois in 1837. He immediately commenced preaching to the people in his new home [Lafayette], and continued to labor in the ministry until his death, which occurred August 20, 1844."[11] The church at Lafayette was organized by Miner on June 15, 1839, but he shared the pastoral duties with a fellow member, Elder Otis, who "preached much within its bounds." However, Miner extended his work, for "he labored as a pioneer in gathering up new churches, and visiting destitute fields. He did not require nor receive much pecuniary aid from the churchs. He said, 'I want to hear the prayers and exhortations of my brethern; this will be my pay.' "

Because of the autonomy of each congregation, it was easy for a number of congregations to appear in a small area. Eventually, groups of churches formed associations with divergent theological understandings but similar denominational consciousness. The first was the Illinois Union, which had been formed as early as 1807.

An outstanding figure in Baptist work in Illinois was John Mason Peck. In 1818 he arrived in the new state as the first Baptist missionary supported by the eastern Missionary Society. Though the Society had to withdraw its support the following year on the ground of insufficient funds, Peck soon became the agent of the Massachusetts Missionary Society and moved permanently to St. Clair County. Here he founded an Illinois missionary society called the "United Society for the Spread of the Gospel." Through this organization Peck was active in finding preachers, often from the East, to work in Illinois.

Soon the Baptist communion in Illinois was rent asunder over the issue of missionaries. By 1824 the Illinois Union had become anti-mission, and in 1830 the Apple Creek Anti-mission Association was formed in Western Illinois. An astute historian of early nineteenth-century American religion has commented: "anti-missionism was largely a frontier movement. It was strongest where educational facilities were lacking and where people were out of touch with the usual cultural influences. Generally the anti-mission Baptists were ultra-Calvinistic in doctrine, were opposed to academic or theological education for the ministry, and were hostile to all societies for the promotion of the spiritual and social welfare of mankind."[12]

Behind this antagonism was the primitivistic objection to centralization of authority. There were those who insisted the Baptist Church must rise from the soil of the frontier as a faithful witness to the Spirit of God in this place. Such persons charged the missionaries with bringing eastern influences to bear on this frontier,

a form of paternalism in this primitivistic area. Also closely related to this same dichotomy was the anti-mission opposition to an educated and paid ministry. There was jealously here, but also the fear that such missionaries would bring to an end the indigenous church of the largely uneducated farmer-preacher. Supporting this in Western Illinois is the comment Peck made in 1823 at the Sangamon Association meeting: "There is a regular conspiracy formed in the Illinois Union to put down missionaries. The root of all this opposition is from the preachers. They fear losing their influence, which must be small indeed."[13] Also significant in the attack on missionary societies was the concern that they had no scriptural foundation and thus were cultural additions that only led to the distortion of the faith. Finally, the hyper-Calvinism of the anti-missionists was useful, as it forcibly argued that God needed no outside agents to bring the elect to repentence. The elect individual would respond to his neighbor's exposition of the Word.

Influenced by the anti-missionism of Alexander Campbell—at one time a Baptist, but so influential in the forming of the Disciples of Christ—some Baptists developed a decided aversion to any attempt to impose an eastern form of faith on Illinois society. Yet John M. Peck worked with others against this trend, supporting missionaries and the creation of schools, and he also took an active leadership in the anti-slavery movement. Exemplifying his mission concern was the organization of the Green County Auxiliary Bible Society in 1824 for the purpose of distributing copies of the Scriptures and other devotional literature. He thought that this would be the "death blow to opposition to the missionaries,"[14] because even the anti-mission Baptists could not oppose the distribution of the Scriptures in a land where they were so lacking. Peck expected that with this spread of God's Word would come a desire for regular preaching.

The first state convention took place in the same county in 1834, amid the recognition that there were distinct differences among the Baptists. But in this area of the state just being settled by immigrants from the east there was probably a more favorable attitude toward missionary enterprises, educational interests, and also benevolent societies.[15] This is demonstrated by the Sangamon Association meeting at Pleasant Grove in 1835, which adopted a resolution declaring non-fellowship with all who advocated the cause of missionaries, temperance societies, and sabbath schools. In response to this was the creation of the Illinois River Baptist Association on November 2, 1836, in Peoria, to actively support the Peck faction of Baptists.[16] Thus, it is evident that even in early Illinois there was the Baptist proliferation that has so marked this denomination in the Prairie State and elsewhere. By 1857 it was estimated that in Illinois there were 30,000 mission supporters and 5,000 anti-mission

advocates.[17]

In many communities the first expression of Christianity was the result of Methodist endeavors. For these people, primitivism was the molding of a society out of the raw materials of the frontier, based on the premise that God intended such a Christian order to be raised up among the people in the situation in which they were living. While proclaiming a democratic Gospel, this denomination was also aided by a rigid, yet efficient, institutional format. Building on a theology expressed by the eighteenth-century Anglican divine, John Wesley, this denomination taught the Biblical interpretation that all men are intended for salvation. Every person has within him, even if it appears very infrequent in some, the desire to be better than he is. When an individual becomes aware of this and tries to improve, he will have some success, but will soon learn of his inability to fulfill his goals. This is a condition caused by his separation from God. When he realizes this, he then ought to be like the Prodigal Son in the story of Jesus, who, when he realized the degradation of his own situation apart from his loving father, decided to return and place himself at the mercy of his parent. However, when the father saw the son trudging homeward, he ran and embraced him. To Methodism the maturation of this restored relationship should eventually reach the point wherein the individual senses only the presence and inspiration of the Father's Spirit. Such a person has attained perfection—not that he scores perfectly on every moral or religious test, but that he consciously knows of no other motivation in his life than the Spirit of God. This theology merged well with the nineteenth-century American idealism which said that the object of American society was to provide the environment in which every individual could develop to the fullest every latent potentiality.

Efficiency is the term to designate the institutional machinery developed to spread this Methodist Gospel of Invitation to return to the Father's House. An army of young bachelors under the close supervision of presiding elders (themselves under the direction of area bishops), criss-crossed the prairies and woodlands on a circuit system, which provided for Methodist preaching on a regular, though perhaps infrequent, schedule everywhere in the West. No matter where a settler went, it was not long before a Methodist circuit rider was in the area, preaching in a home, at a school, in the saloon, or if need be, in a barn or under a shade tree. Expressive of this in Western Illinois is the career of the colorful Peter Cartwright. He felt that "the great mass of western people wanted a preacher that could mount a stump, a block, or old log, or stand on the bed of a wagon, and without note or manuscript, quote, expound, and apply the Word of God to the hearts and consciences of the people."[18] In his preaching he could depict hell so vividly that the startled sinner in his

Methodist preacher Peter Cartwright.

imagination could see the fiery billows roll along, one after another, hear the ponderous iron doors open and creak upon their rusty hinges, and the rusty bolts slide back and forth as the lost and damned were shut into the seething lake of burning brimstone.[19] However, it was not the desire to preach hell that motivated Cartwright, but rather, the desire to make more clear the love that God has for all men, to save them from such an experience. Cartwright loved all men, and he was determined to speak to them in ways which would leave an impression upon their hearts and would inspire them to seek the Lord.

The small classes that were organized by the intinerant preachers were composed of Methodist pioneers and persons touched by the peripetic preachers. These became the local nuclei of the Methodist presence, and meeting frequently under the discipline of lay leaders, they established the groundwork for an eventual congregation. Composed of enough classes to ask for the appointment of a local preacher, who could well be a circuit rider who had married and now dismounted in favor of a more permanent location, congregations could soon be flourishing.

With a frequent change of ministers so that no preacher came under the influence of the congregation, the Methodist Church offered a prophetic voice, calling all men, women, and children to the higher plane of Christian living. In Western Illinois, as in the American West as a whole, Methodism veered from the cultural standards of John Wesley to become increasingly an indigenous American expression of Christianity. Applying his understanding of Biblical theology, the Methodist preacher sought to create out of the raw materials of the American frontier an expression of faith attuned to the character and aspirations of the settlers. This was, of course, the essence of Christian primitivism.

Accenting this is the commentary of Cartwright at the arrival in Springfield of a Presbyterian minister in 1824. He describes him as

> a very well educated man, and had regularly studied theology in some of the Eastern states, where they manufacture young preachers like they do lettuce in hot houses. He brought with him a number of old manuscript sermons, and read them to the people; but as to common sense, he had very little, and he was almost totally ignorant of the manners and usages of the world, especially this new Western world; yet he came here to evangelize and Christianize us poor heathen.[20]

Cartwright acknowledges that soon the minister understood that he could not adapt to Illinois, but his did not stop the circuit rider from telling the new arrival to "quit reading old manuscript sermons, and learn to speak extemporaneously; that the Western people were born and reared in hard times, and were an out-spoken and off-hand people; that if he did not adopt this manner of preaching, the Methodists would set the whole Western world on fire before he

could light his match." With tongue in cheek, Cartwright concludes his analysis: "He tried it a while, but became discouraged, and left for parts unknown." What was needed in Illinois were religious leaders who sought not to impose eastern ways, but to inspire the natural goodness that was resident in the settlers.

More than other groups, the Methodists employed the camp meeting as a tool of Christian mission and nurture. Further developing these religious meetings orginating in eastern Kentucky at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Methodists used a technique that was quite successful, particularly during the first generation of settlement. At these great open air meetings, which could last from a few days to a week or more, large numbers of people would gather for intense socialization as well as religious experience. As the nights wore on, a powerful preacher extolling the terrors of hell in the midst of the torchlit camp grounds would suddenly shift his tone and articulate the glories of heaven. In so doing he would wear down the will of many an auditor. People often responded with considerable physical agitation to being moved by the Spirit.

Cartwright vividly describes an 1827 camp meeting held near Whitehall, in Green County:

> On Sunday night I mounted the stand, took my text, and, though I had loaded in a hurry, drew the bow at a venture, and let fly arrows in almost all directions: some laughed, some cried; some became angry; some ran; some cursed me right out; some shouted; some fell to the earth; and there was a general uproar throughout the whole encampment. Our meeting lasted all night, and the slain of the Lord were many.[21]

The Methodist preachers realized that such conversions could indeed be short lived. A repentant sinner was not immediately admitted to membership. Writing about a revival in Warsaw in 1853, Cartwright observed, "We give every sinner a chance, and take them on probation for six months, not as members, but under the care of the Church, on trial for membership; and surely, if they do not in that time give satisfactory evidence of their sincerity and fitness for membership, it is not likely they ever will."[22] He then notes that if at the end of this time they do not display Christian growth "we simply drop them . . . [and] leave them where we found them; we have at least tried to do them good, and have done them no harm." The Methodist revival inspired a frontiersman to express the goodness inherent within him, and then the discipline of the denomination gave him opportunity to nurture his belief and thus develop an indigenous faith.

The most American of the religious groups present in Western Illinois in the nineteenth century was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To the Mormons, primitivism amounted to reestablishing in the western hemisphere the church that had gone

awry in the eastern hemisphere in the fourth century. Formally organized in upstate New York in 1830, the Mormon Church was headquartered in Nauvoo from 1839 to 1846. Preaching a gospel which asserted that "Man is a god in embryo," Mormons expressed hope in the infinite development of the human personality.[23] This concept is stated in a catechetical fashion:

> We believe in a God who is Himself progressive, whose perfection consists in eternal advancement—a Being who has attained His exalted state by a path which now His children are permitted to follow, whose glory it is their heritage to share. . . . As man is, God once was; as God is, man may be.[24]

In the Mormon Church primitivism and perfectionism were blended more thoroughly than in any other group. This mixture centered about a charismatic, self-proclaimed prophet, Joseph Smith, who also brought to light a scripture that claimed to be the record of God's people in the western hemisphere (*The Book of Mormon*). This religion was then developed in a hierarchial and disciplined institution and community. The Mormons brought to Western Illinois a faith that blossomed at Nauvoo, but at the same time, the larger the community became, the more it was feared and harassed by neighbors.

The definitive development of the faith occured under the leadership of America's greatest colonizer, Brigham Young, who led the persecuted Saints to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake following the death of the prophet in the Carthage jail at the hands of enraged Hancock County residents in June, 1844. In the frontier of the intermountain West, this religion was able to inspire men and women to make the desert blossom as a rose, and to bring to maturity this indigenous faith which combined revealed religion and American aspirations.

Mormonism does not have a European background. It was influenced in part by Sidney Rigdon, a one time associate of Alexander Campbell in the early Disciple movement, who also became an associate of Joseph Smith. Within these two groups, native to the American West, the primitivist point of view reached its culmination. The popular Mormon hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," composed by William Clayton in Iowa on April 15, 1846, at the start of the exodus to the Great Salt Lake Valley, poetically expresses this faith as it was nurtured in Western Illinois:

> Come, come ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear;
> But with joy wend your way.
> Though hard to you this journey may appear,
> Grace shall be as your day
> 'Tis better far for us to strive
> Our useless cares from us to drive;
> Do this, and joy your hearts will swell—
> All is well: all is well:

Why should we mourn to think our lot is hard
'Tis not so; all is right.
Why should we think to earn a great reward,
If we now shun the fight?
Gird up your loins; fresh courage take;
Our God will never us forsake;
And soon we'll have this tale to tell—
All is well: all is well:

We'll find the place which God for us prepared,
Far away in the West,
Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;
There the Saints will be blessed.
We'll make the air with music ring,
Shout praises to our God and King;
Above the rest these words we'll tell—
All is well: all is well:

And should we die before our journey's through,
Happy day: all is well:
We then are free from toil and sorrow, too;
With the just we shall dwell:
But if our lives are spared again to see the Saints
their rest obtain,
O how we'll make this chorus swell—
All is well: all is well:

II

In marked contrast to the primitivist attitude were the denominations representing the point of view designated "paternalism." The major thrust of this orientation was to assert that ongoing history was the arena of the activity of God. There was no golden age to be reconstructed, nor would a utopia be fashioned upon the earth. Rather, the Spirit of God inspired individuals and cultures as they struggled through the vissicitudes of life. Each age saw Christianity adapt cultural features which were thought to enhance its meaning for people; and as civilizations advanced, what had been once meaningful became so incorporated into the fabric of the religion that rarely was anything discarded.

So it is that paternalistic denominations active in Western Illinois have sought to establish and maintain Christian congregations which not only express a particular religious understanding, but do so in an established cultural setting. The common attitude of these denominations toward the early and developing frontier was expressed by the Connecticut Congregational theologian, Horace Bushnell. Writing a missionary tract for the American Home Missionary Society in 1847, entitled *Barbarism, the First Danger,* he looked out upon the frontier and did not see an environment conducive to the rearing of Christian youth. Instead, he asserted that when people move westward they become uprooted, and in their new location, even if they settle permanently, it is a long time,

perhaps two or three generations, before new roots are thrust down. During the intervening period, men, women and children degenerate to a much lower level of civilization. Unconsciously at first, even men and women of religious intent have this experience. But Bushnell also contended that many people who move to the West are already devoid of religious principles, and the raw conditions of the frontier make their condition even worse. He also saw this situation compounded by the presence of Roman Catholic missionaries, who espoused a religion and culture that was despised by this Yankee and taught a monarchial way of life that was an anathema to this republican.

On the positive side, Bushnell is remembered for his work in Christian nurture. In the development of a Christian personality, he said it is best to assume that a child should never realize he has ever been anything but a Christian. What is needed is not a vital conversion experience, but a developing and maturing of the attitude which is instilled in him, not only in a Christian home, but in a religious community. This is similar to the struggle that was going on in some denominations, such as the Presbyterian, and between the primitivist and paternalistic groups in general—the struggle between the "way of the revival" and the "way of the catechism" as the proper form to instill and nurture the Christian life.

Early examples of the paternalistic attitude are to be found in the Congregational and Presbyterian denominations. In the early nineteenth century, these two largely "Yankee" denominations, espousing a similar theological outlook, but having differing institutional structures, sought to share the mission field so that where one went the other did not go for sometime. Hence, in Moline an early Congregational church and two later ones are seen, while in Rock Island several Presbyterian churches are evident, but no Congregational churches.

In addition to the Plan of Union of 1801, the American Home Missionary Society, formed in 1826, was used by both denominations for over ten years to extend these paternalistic groups unto the Illinois prairies. After that time, increased denominational consciousness led the Presbyterians to rely on their own agencies for expansion. Initially these home missionaries often regarded themselves as the bearers of the true religion, and went so far as to list places where there were no Congregational or Presbyterian ministrations as "destitute," even though primitivist denominations were active in such communities. In the work of these missionaries, a distinct New England flavor was imparted as they consciously sought to transplant the folkways and institutions of New England and New York.[25]

Typical of these two groups was the coming of a minister to preach to a single congregation and perhaps to conduct a school. To

also insure the stability of a Christian culture, the minister and congregation tended to appeal to only that part of the population which would appreciate the rich heritage their faith had to offer for the enhancement of life. Writing in Illinois, Lyman Beecher stated: "It is of vast importance to settle in each county as soon as possible. Let us drive to this point. This is the object: to place one missionary in every county and six or eight pious families . . . without any loss to New England. Show them what a field there is to grow in grace by doing good. I mean to bring on a colony with me."[26]

This policy also suggests a particular form of frontier penetration traceable to the early Middle Ages in England and on the continent—that is, the sending out of religious colonies. The earliest example of the colony approach in Western Illinois can be traced to this notice in the *Hampshire Gazette* on February 9, 1831:

> Illinois Colonial Association
> A Meeting of the above association
> will be holden at
> WARNER'S COFFEE SHOP
> Northampton, Masschussetts
> on Wednesday, the 16th, at 10:00 A.M.
> Persons desirous of uniting with them are
> invited to attend this meeting.
> Per order of committee
> D. B. Jones, Sec'y.[27]

At the meeting it was agreed by a number of associates to remove to some part of the state of Illinois in the ensuing spring. To develop a plan for this transfer, a constitution was prepared with this preamble:

> Whereas the subject of settling the valley of the Mississippi by colonies of industrious and moral men from the Atlantic States is viewed to be of vast importance to the future of the inhabitants of that valley and to the common good of our country by many of the sons of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, and—
>
> Whereas a number of persons in the old county of Hampshire are desirous of emigrating to some part of the State of Illinois for the purpose of better providing for themselves and their families, provided the privileges of a social, moral and religious character which they have now, and which they highly value, can be made secure to them in their future residence.
>
> Now, therefore, for the purpose of accomplishing the above objects, the undersigned do form themselves into an association and adopt the following constitution. . . .[28]

Ebenezer Phelps, a deacon in the Northampton church, pressed the need for the organization of a church before the colonists departed if indeed the religious objectives were to be met. This was accomplished on March 23, 1831, with the name "Hampshire Colony Church" being selected.

The main body of the colony met in Albany and embarked in a canal boat at the beginning of May, and after a difficult two-month

journey, they arrived at their new home on the Bureau River in Putnam County. Naming the settlement "Greenfield," the church met only irregularly until the later part of October and did not construct a church building until 1834. This frame structure was described as having been built "in the true New England and Pilgrim style."[29] The first resident minister, Rev. Lucien Farnham, arrived in October, 1835, and thus came into function the first Congregational church in Illinois.[30]

Rev. Farnham and the majority were strongly abolitionist, and so the minority were given permission to leave and in 1844 formed the Independent Congregational Church, which became the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton (as the town was by then known). The original congregation remained staunchly abolitionist, especially under the leadership of Owen Lovejoy, who served as minister during this period (1838-1855).

This is an example of the paternalistic determination to carry an eastern civilization to the prairies of Illinois. As the *Record Book* of the Hampshire Colony Church indicates, many of the ministers of the church were not even American born, but were natives of England, Wales, or Scotland.[31]

In nineteenth-century Illinois, Henry County alone was to receive five such colonies from the Congregational-Presbyterian tradition. The one most easily studied today is Geneseo. The congregation was organized in Genesee County, New York in 1836, and the members of the congregation-colony all came to the prairies of Illinois, there to establish a beacon in an unsettled land which would shine the light of the Congregational Christian culture across these vast areas. Even today, in spite of what the later arrival of the railroad did to the community, one can get the impression of a New England town centered around the village green. The history of Geneseo Colony and the development of the Congregational Church of Geneseo were so closely connected that, for many, to speak of one meant the other also. Their interests were interwoven for twenty years.

Soon to aid in this cause were the schools of this persuasion, such as the Manual Labor High School at Geneseo and the Manual Labor College at Galesburg, later named Knox College. The formation of the latter school is the story of Reverend George W. Gale of Adams, New York, who in 1834 sought to instruct a group in emigrating for the purpose of founding a city and erecting a manual labor college. By December, 1836, forty families had reached Galesburg, and the state legislature granted college and city charters on February 15, 1837. This was the best organized of the colonial enterprises, and the college was a union institution in whose advancement New School Presbyterians and Congregationalists collaborated.[32]

An example of the non-colony mission activity is the Pope's River Presbyterian Church near Aledo, which during its somewhat

First Congregational Church and Seminary, Geneseo, in 1865.

Pope Creek Presbyterian Church, Mercer County.

short congregational life (1837-1869) parented or grandparented eight congregations. The original building still stands as a retreat center, a silent witness to a ministry well-done. In fact, few counties in the nation are as Presbyterian as Mercer, showing the perseverance of this tradition in Western Illinois. This development is attributed to the settlement of Mercer County inland from the Mississippi River after the close of the Black Hawk War in 1832. At that time farmers and tradesmen from Ohio and Pennsylvania began to arrive. The first trading post in the county was started in New Boston in 1835 and was owned by a strict Scottish Seceder. According to the *History of Mercer County,* "So correct was he in his views of the Sabbath that he penned up his rooster on that day that he might not disturb the holy day."[33] In early 1836 Reverend John Montgomery was sent to the present Sherrard area by the Home Board of the Presbyterian General Assembly to work under the guidance of the newly formed Schuyler Presbytery. Later in that same year, Thomas and Robert Candor, the former a brother-in-law of Montgomery, arrived from Pennsylvania, followed by their families. Strongly committed to Old School Presbyterianism, these families organized what was then the most western Presbyterian church in the United States, the Pope's River Church.[34] This congregation was dedicated to preserving the Scotch-Irish faith that the Candors had brought to the United States from Northern Ireland in 1740.

However, there had also arrived some New School Presbyterians who were more committed to revivalism and a somewhat primitivistic approach to religion. It was at this time that the Presbyterian Church divided, as shown by the split in the Illinois Synod, which met in Peoria in 1838. In the 1840's, other forms of Presbyterianism organized congregations in Mercer County, and the expansion of this denomination continued so that even today Mercer and Menard Counties have proportionately the highest Presbyterian concentrations in Illinois.[35] The session records of Mercer County Presbyterian churches unfold the tale of the Presbyterian emigrants to this county and their determination to see the coming generations nurtured in this faith and marrying only within Presbyterianism, thus keeping this tradition intact.[36] But it is a tradition that has been in tension, as some forms of Presbyterianism favor a much more strict adherence to the paternalistic attitude, while others have a sense of kinship with the primivitistic orientation.

In the last years of the eighteenth century there were those who were tolling the death bell for the Episcopal church, the denomination which had just been severed organizationally from its parent, the Church of England. The story of this denomination in the early decades of the nineteenth century is indeed not a story of numerical growth, but rather of sustained determination, as

individual congregations did come into existence and dioceses were slowly formed.

The Episcopal Church was the most paternalistically oriented of those with an English background. It thus sought even more intensely to impose upon Western Illinois the cultural outlook of the historic church. Working against this was the fact that not many of those loyal to the Church emigrated to Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa. In addition to the paucity of loyal churchmen and women, there was also the added difficulty of appealing to scattered persons who had neither interest in nor affection for the Episcopal order, with its English antecedents. There were many who openly disliked the Church. Also there were those who had once been within the bosom of the Church but who now resisted every official effort to reclaim them.

A further hindrance to the work was the fact that the workers were pitifully few and not always able to adjust to the society they found. Some clergymen who might have adapted well would not come to the frontier because there was not sufficient promise of support. In Iowa as well as Illinois this made imperative a decision announced by Bishop Kemper to the Iowa Diocese in 1854: "Owing to the great scarcity of clergymen, an evil under which the church has labored for many years, and over the sad effect of which every congregation in the Diocese has great cause to mourn, we shall only be able for a long period to come, to direct our attention to these important places (six towns with organized parishes) in which Episcopalians are to be found."[37] Carrying the point further is the Rev. John Batchelder, a pioneer priest in Burlington, Iowa who had founded the first Episcopal parish in Illinois, at Jacksonville. He writes in his parish report for 1857 concerning the lack of clergy and the low salaries: "they are all the legitimate results of the wretched system of clerical starvation, which the church, with her boasted wealth, hath seen fit to adopt. And still she calls for men of ability, men of education, to promote her interests and to extend her borders."[38] Yet in the same report this pioneer priest writes: "Members of our Church I find scattered through every community, and settled in almost every neighborhood. By due care these scattered families will become nuclei of future churches. I know of no material obstacles to our having flourishing churches in most rural districts, but our inexcusable apathy and unwarranted disposition to depreciate their importance. While the money is chiefly given to the towns and villages, a clergyman in the country has ample opportunities to preach the Gospel to far greater numbers of people, than he would preach to, confined within the limits of a corporation."[39] However, broader contact was not to develop for this paternalistic denomination, as it did for the primitivists.

The Episcopal attitude toward the region is seen in the

Courtesy of Virginius H. Chase Special Collections Center, Bradley University Library.

Bishop Philander Chase. Engraving by J. P. Quilley, based on 1824 portrait by J. G. Strutt.

organization of the dioceses in Illinois and Iowa. It was on March 9, 1835 that the Primary Convention of the Illinois Diocese was convened in Peoria and Philander Chase was elected bishop. Having resigned the Ohio bishophric and residing without jurisdiction in Michigan, Bishop Chase saw this election as a call from God and once again took up the rigors of a frontier Episcopal Bishop. In his case the work was made even more difficult by his own convictions. Having been converted to the Episcopal Church by his study of the Prayer Book, he was doubly disappointed by popular indifference to this treasury of devotion. He wrote concerning Illinois Episcopalians from Dixon's Ferry on July 4, 1837:

> I cannot refrain from remarking, that I have met with more discouragement, in pressing the use of our Prayer Book on the congregation in general, from the disrespect of our own people to their own rules, than from most other sources. Many persons professing to be Episcopalians do not kneel in time of confession and prayer; and this directly in the face of the rubric. Others see this. How keen is the report: "Reform your own people before you can expect us to join you; your rules are scriptural and good, but they are a dead letter, or they would, ere this, have had a pious influence on those that own them to be rules of their conduct."[40]

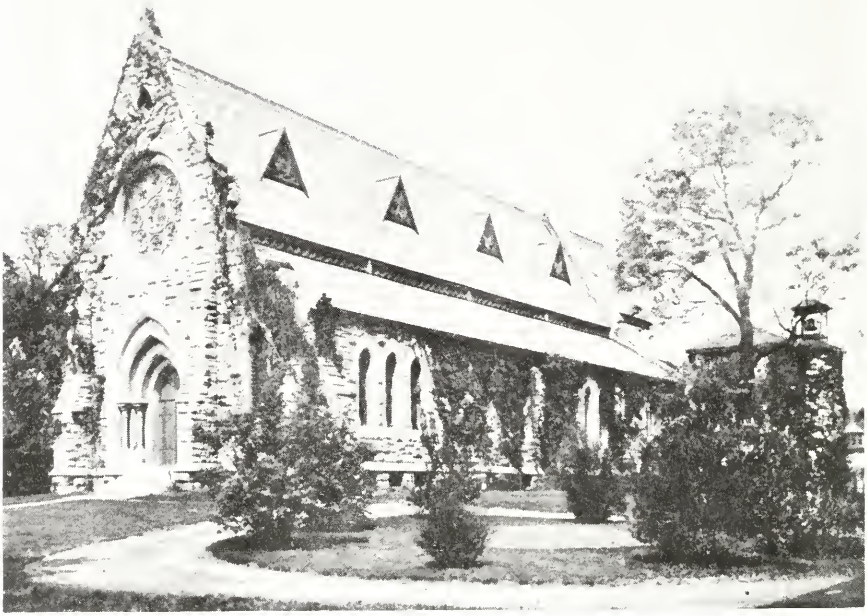
In the same year (1835) that the Illinois parish representatives elected a bishop, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church authorized the election of Missionary Bishops, who were to go to areas of the West where there were no organized parishes. This was a dramatic change in the thinking of this denomination. Instead of the bishophric being the capstone of a structure of independently established congregations in a state, the bishop was now to be the first representative of the Church to an area. He would bring with him the full presence of the Church and, from the top, seek out places to establish parishes and then secure men to work and the funds to support them. Bishop Chase expressed his strong support for this move in his address to the 1838 Illinois Diocesan convention, lamenting that it had not happened earlier in Illinois.[41] As it was, the Illinois Diocese had been organized after an Episcopal presence of just two years in the state and the establishment of only four parishes. At that 1835 national convention Jackson Kemper was elected a Missionary Bishop to the West, including the area within the Black Hawk Purchase, which in 1833 allowed white settlement westward some fifty miles from the Mississippi River into what was to become the state of Iowa.

As a result of the new mission approach, by 1838 the Domestic Committee of the Episcopal Church could report three mission stations had been selected on the west bank of the Mississippi, and two years later a parish was organized in Burlington. The Rev. John Batchelder was supported in part by funds from the Philadelphia Association for Mission Work in the West, and certain eastern

parishes made direct contributions to developing Iowa mission stations. Eleven years later there were still only four resident clergy in the new state, serving five parishes. In 1853 six Episcopal clergymen in Iowa petitioned Bishop Kemper to establish a diocese in the state. The following year, on May 31, seven clergymen serving eight parishes and two preaching points, with a total communicant membership of 167, met for the first annual Diocesean Convention in Davenport.[42] In 1855 Bishop Henry W. Lee arrived to begin a nearly twenty-year episcopate.

The change in missionary method had not made much change in the impact this denomination was making in Iowa as compared to Illinois. In the former, the pioneers of the first two decades had primarily been emigrants from states immediately to the east, with the dominant influence being southern. This contrasted with a more northern influence in Western Illinois. With the building in 1856 of the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi, connecting Rock Island and Davenport, Iowa was opened to a much more rapid growth. This included representation from the eastern areas of vital Episcopalianism, yet the immediate impact of this was delayed by the depression of 1857 and the Civil War. Shortly after the conclusion of that conflict, plans for building a cathedral in Davenport took solid shape. On June 27, 1867, the cornerstone was laid for Grace Cathedral (now called Trinity), and the edifice was completed and consecrated on June 18, 1868. This building embodies the paternalistic attitude. The design is Victorian Gothic, the type then being used in the significant upsurge of church building in mid and late nineteenth-century England. The contemporaneity of the style to that of the Church of England is not, however, carried through in the building materials. Instead of the brick then being used in England, Davenport's church is constructed of stone, the material used in the building of England's great cathedrals in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From the point of view of materials, the church conveys the impression that it has been here since the voyages of Columbus. It was quite a spectacle for the residents and visitors in this frontier river town to see the large chunks of stone being hauled up Brady Street hill to the site of this English fortress. Further demonstrating the paternalism in this church is the inclusion behind the pulpit of a stone from England's Canterbury Cathedral (whose origins date to the last decade of the sixth century). So it is that Episcopalianism represents the epitomy of imposing upon Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa the English language version of traditional European Christianity.

Paternalism was a strong orientation in continental European groups which immigrated to Western Illinois. With these people the cultural baggage was of even more importance. For some, the



Grace (Trinity) Episcopal Cathedral, Davenport.

religious element served not only their spiritual needs, but also markedly served as a cohesive force to aid in retaining some of their meaningful social customs and traditions while the adjustment was made to the American way of life.

German Lutherans had been immigrating to America since the colonial days, and had been divided into several institutional expressions of Lutheran synodical affiliations. Some of these had adapted increasingly American characteristics, particularly the English language and dominant American Protestant theological motifs. Others retained a stronger interest in German cultural patterns and continental Lutheran theology. Both these types were to be found in Western Illinois, but the Germans who most ardently adhered to the parternalistic pattern were the Saxons who arrived in Missouri in 1838. With the organization of the "German Evangelical Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States" in Chicago in 1847, these Lutherans had a denominational vehicle to establish congregations in Western Illinois.

Under the leadership of Martin Stephan, these "Old Lutherans" had suffered a generation of persecution for their refusal to be incorporated into the Prussian Union Church established by the Prussian Crown in 1817. Claiming adherence only to Lutheranism as

it had developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these Germans wanted no part of a church which formally included the Reformed tradition. While factors other than religion were involved in the decision to come to America, religion had the most direct influence on the decision.[43]

The organization of the Missouri Synod in less than a decade after the church's arrival gave testimony to the determination of these Lutherans. The Synod was founded by and for immigrants from Germany, not as a branch of some German church but as a separate, independent, designedly American church body. The accent was clearly on the German language because the doctrinal symbols—such as Luther's translation of the Bible, his catechisms, and the composite collection of Lutheran documents, the *Book of Concord*—were to be read and taught in German. Thus the objective of the Synod was to missionize among German-speaking people in the name of pure Lutheranism. Abetting this cause was the provision of the Synod constitution that no congregation or parish could become a member of the Synod unless it maintained a school for its children. This has led to the largest American Protestant parochial school system.

With this determination to preserve true Lutheranism in German congregations augmented by parish schools, a pattern had to be developed to establish such congregations. At the first meeting of the Synod, a "visitor" was appointed, whose task was to travel around to the new settlements and to lend whatever counsel and assistance he could for the organization of congregations and preaching-stations. Many Germans scattered across the frontier did not welcome such visitors because they sought freedom from religion, rather than involvement in a strictly defined form of German Lutheranism. Even for those Germans who desired a ministerial presence, it was often not immediately forthcoming because of the shortage of pastors, caused in part by the long education process involved in preparing a man for ordination. Nonetheless, a Methodist-type circuit system was established, wherein a man was responsible for a number of preaching-stations that led at times to Sunday schools and ladies' aid organizations. These culminated frequently in a congregation which became part of a larger parish. Eventually the parish was divided into a number of self-sustaining congregations, and full programs were undertaken.

Further exemplifying this pattern is the story of Swedish Lutheranism in Western Illinois. In 1849 Pastor Lars Esbjorn came to Andover, prompted in part by his desire to preserve Swedish immigrants from the influence of the charismatic Eric Jansen, who had led in the establishment of nearby Bishop Hill in 1846, and from the work of Jonas Hedstrom and his Swedish Methodist activity

Swedish Lutheran Church, Moline.

centered around Victoria, where in the same year of 1846 the first Swedish Methodist church in the world had been organized. Esbjorn himself had been influenced in Sweden by the English Methodist preacher, George Scott, and when he came to Western Illinois, he received support from the largely Congregational-Presbyterian American Home Missionary Society. Thus when he established the first Swedish Lutheran congregation in America since colonial times at Andover in March, 1850, and a second congregation in Moline nine months later, he sought to preserve the Lutheran faith. However, he combined this effort with a strong statement against intoxicants and in support of the American Home Missionary Society's demand that baptism alone was not a sufficient basis for church membership.

Some years after Esbjorn's return to Sweden, these two congregations erected large brick churches, Andover in 1867 and Moline in 1876. Indicative of the paternalism expressed in these buildings is the observation that a pastor of a Stockholm Lutheran parish made when touring the buildings with the author.[44] When asked if they were truly Swedish Lutheran church structures, the pastor looked about the building at Andover and stated that it was indeed a replication of nineteenth-century rural churches in some Swedish provinces. He noted that the most accurate duplication was

to be seen in the shadings in the stained glass windows. Thus, a Swedish immigrant or his children would be transported back to Sweden when they entered the Andover church. Being asked the same question in the Moline First Lutheran Church, the pastor reflected for a moment and said that this church was not like a Lutheran church at all, but was a rather faithful reproduction of Baptist churches being built in Swedish cities. In either case, the attempt had been successful in reproducing Swedish buildings, even though many of the Swedish immigrants were in conflict with the state church and were sympathetic to the more personal faith represented by several denominations at work in Western Illinois, where Swedish Methodist and Baptist churches and denominational organizations were produced.

However, the congregations at Andover and Moline were two of thirty-six Swedish and thirteen Norwegian congregations that met in June, 1860, at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin, to form a Scandanavian Synod. The name adopted was Augustana, the Latin term for the basic Lutheran document of 1530, the Augsburg Confession. This was indicative of the theological stance of the Synod, which was committed to the premises enunciated in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. It meant to make its position unmistakably clear: this was to be a Lutheran Church in the classical sense, without addition or subtraction.

Soon the Swedes established the preservation of the Swedish language as a high-priority congregational activity. For them, education did not mean the founding of a parochial school to compete with developing public schools, but rather the establishment of the "Swede's" school. This institution was originally intended as an aid to the immigrant in adjusting to the unfamiliar conditions and language. It soon became clear that the children needed no help in learning English—quite the contrary. Without help, they would soon be unable to understand Swedish. The social pattern of the second generation repudiating their immigrant-parents' culture began to be evidenced. To the parents, the Swedish language carried many pleasant memories and tender associations. To their American-educated children, Swedish was the language spoken at home and in church and often ridiculed at school. Alarmed by their children's growing indifference, they exerted pressure, causing the parish school to become the instrument for the preservation of the Swedish language among the rising generation.

Even the earliest clergy, who unlike the Saxon Germans, had expected to quickly transfer to English, were deterred in their efforts by the waves of immigrants arriving after the Civil War. In Western Illinois it became necessary to retain Swedish as the language of the church. The "Swede" school, taught in the summer by a college or seminary student, included the study of Swedish, Bible history,

Luther's Small Catechism, and hymns. A typical Swedish Lutheran congregation in Western Illinois is Immanuel, Altona. Formally organized in 1859, the first "Swede" school was held for three months in the summer of 1873. Two years later the term had been extended to six months. In 1876 a second school was opened north of town for a two-month term. From 1888 to 1894 the congregation maintained three separate schools. By 1905 only one school remained, and it was not until 1916 that the pastor announced that approximately half of the instruction was not conducted in English. By 1921 the Swedish language had all but disappeared from the school, and the institution was changed to the summer Bible school that has continued in many Lutheran churches. As the adults became increasingly Americanized, they saw less value in conserving Swedish for the language's sake. In fact, in later years the students may have spoken Swedish, but they thought in English.[45]

At the Altona congregation, all worship services were initially in Swedish, as was the instruction in the "Swede" school. While Sunday school classes were largely in English, confirmation instruction was in Swedish. The young people's organization, the Luther League, conducted its meetings in English. This divergence in programming encouraged younger generations to look to other denominations for worship. For a long time the Augustana Synod seemed to accept these losses quietly, apparently taking it for granted that those who insisted on getting their religion in English dress could be expected—and, in fact, were welcome—to go elsewhere.[46]

At Altona the congregational meeting for 1907 approved an English service for the first Sunday of the month. A year later this was rescinded, and it was not until 1913 that two Sunday evening services per month were in English. World War I then hastened the move to English services, for in 1916 the congregation voted to hold all Sunday evening services in English. The congregation swelled in size, yet it was not until 1938 that the last regularly scheduled Swedish service was held.[47]

Danish Lutherans also immigrated to Western Illinois, establishing St. Peter's church at Sheffield in 1869. The Danish language was preserved in the Sabbath school held on Saturdays, where lessons were conducted in church doctrine and the native language. Confirmation instruction was a part of the life of the early teenager in this congregation—and in all Lutheran congregations. As was typical of the time, this consisted of much memorization of the Lutheran teachings, and in Sheffield, it was all in Danish.

A particular contribution of the Danes to Sheffield society was the observance of Christmas. Before the Danes came to Sheffield, Christmas was like any other day of the year. The Danish immigrants were used to their old country's traditions, and so they celebrated

Christmas in Sheffield just as they had done in their homeland, from December 25 to January 7. They were the first to decorate Christmas trees with lighted candles and give presents to the children. For two weeks the people celebrated with parties, dances, and religious ceremonies. A Danish businessman was the first to close his store on Christmas Eve and Day, and also on New Year's Day.[48]

The Danes slowly moved from Sheffield, and in 1955 St. Peter's was disbanded. While this did not happen to most Lutheran immigrant churches, they did share a determination to not only preserve Lutheranism, but to do so in the language and culture of the European homeland. There were exceptions to this rule in the gradual establishment of more and more English Lutheran churches, primarily by Germans of colonial or early nineteenth-century immigrant families, and by later generations of nineteenth-century immigrants.

More consistantly paternalistic than the various ethnic Lutherans were the Roman Catholics, also of diverse European backgrounds. The Roman Catholic Church came in style—European style, Roman style—replete with its canon law, rubrics, liturgy, its doctrinal and moral system. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church obliged its adherents to be traditional.

The imposition of this centuries-old European religious form on the frontier is seen in two basic patterns, as exemplified in Davenport, Iowa and on the Illinois side of the Mississippi. The Davenport scene is dominated by the patronage of Antoine LeClaire, and the Illinois story is centered around the circuit rider priest, Father John Alleman, and his grassroots approach.

Antoine LeClaire was Davenport's first citizen and foremost Catholic layman. The son of a French Canadian fur trader and a Pottawattamie princess, LeClaire first arrived at Fort Armstrong in 1818, two years after its establishment. Like his father, he was an employee of the American Fur Company, but he was also in the service of the federal government as an interpreter, speaking English and Spanish with a French accent, in addition to handling fourteen or fifteen Indian tongues. He took up permanent residence in what was to be Davenport in 1827, and after the completion of the Black Hawk War, he laid plots for the city, finally being responsible for nine additions. He gave the land for the site of the first Catholic church, which was appropriately called St. Anthony's. Located in the midst of the infant settlement, the cornerstone was laid by the travelling Dominican missionary, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, in 1837. Constructed of brick, it was the first such building in Davenport, built at a time when there were not more than two dozen Roman Catholics in the town. The structure was completed and paid for (with LeClaire being a basic benefactor) when the first priest,

St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Davenport.

Father John Pelamourges, arrived in 1839. The latter almost immediately began teaching the children, though a separate school building was not erected for seventeen years.[49]

The decades of the thirties and forties marked the arrival of significant numbers of Germans and Irish to this area, and St. Anthony's soon became too small to handle the enlarged congregation. In spite of the building of a larger stone church during the years 1850-1853, and the coming of a German priest, the Germans asked to have a church of their own. In 1856, St. Kunegunda (later St. Joseph) was built in "Germantown" in the western part of the community on land donated by another Catholic layman, G. C. R. Mitchell. A year later a school was started in the gallery, but in 1860 a separate building was erected. This continued the Catholic policy of opening a parochial school almost immediately after the establishment of a parish.

This action of the Germans evidently piqued LeClaire, for as he was opening his eighth addition to the city, his previous offer of 1854 was accepted, and he was responsible for donating another church square on the hill in the eastern section of the city for the site of Davenport's third Catholic church. This time the patron not only deeded the land; the entire expense of construction was met by him:

labor costs, all building materials, the bell, the organ, the altar and vestments, plus the rectory and, some years later, even another rectory. The school was opened in 1859, having its own building in 1871. This parish was named St. Marguerite, which was the name of LeClaire's wife. He also gave the land for St. Margaret's Cemetery, which was later named Mount Calvary.[50]

By the time of LeClaire's death in 1861, the Roman Catholic Church was firmly established in Davenport, much of the credit being due to its generous patron. His influence did not even cease with his death. He had given the church an entire downtown block, in which was located the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Davenport, which was established in 1881 when southern Iowa was separated from the Diocese of Dubuque.

Much more typical of Roman Catholic penetration into Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa was the career of Father John Alleman. Born in the Alsace Valley of France, he emigrated with his parents to Ohio in 1832. Two years later he was ordained a priest in the Dominican order. A bit eccentric, he had difficulty working with other priests, but in 1840 he was secured by Bishop Matthias Loras of Dubuque for the small German parish in Fort Madison. The bishop claimed that Protestantism would take hold forever in this area if there was not unceasing effort put forth by Catholic missionary priests who could speak the language of the pioneers.[51]

Alleman was responsible for the building of a brick church in Fort Madison in 1846, but he did not by any means limit his activity to this town. He travelled in both Iowa and Illinois, and at the request of Bishop William J. Quarter of Chicago, switched his home parish to Nauvoo in 1850 so that he might more adequately minister to the Germans who had replaced the Mormons there. Nonetheless, like a Methodist circuit rider, he continued to itinerate to the Illinois River and almost to the Wisconsin border. He travelled mainly by foot (sometimes hitching a ride on a wagon or steamboat), carrying his church vestments and altar pieces in leather saddle bags and using a stump or plank thrown across some saw horses as his altar. Whenever abroad on his rounds, he always wore a black cassock and broad-rimmed hat. By so doing, he could say, "I am a poor Dominican Friar. I made a vow of poverty and another to establish missions, and with God's grace I will keep them both."[52]

His motto was: "I will plant, let others water; I leave it to God to increase."[53] His plan for the future uplift of the Church was simple. When he arrived in a settlement where there were Catholics, he did not fail to assure them of the great future in store for all the West country and to insist that they should aid him in securing land for a church and school. He also was adamant that an appropriate church be built in which the traditional liturgy of the Church could be celebrated. His letters indicate that he was often in debt, and this

resulted from the accumulation of bills for brick, lumber, and cut stone.[54]

Alleman's first appearance in Rock Island in 1851 provides an example of the way he worked. He began at once to build a cut limestone church, with the stone being quarried right on the site. The result was a small Gothic church, with the window sills and some other trimmings being made of stone taken from the ruins of the Mormon Temple in Nauvoo, which had been loaded on flatboats and transported up the Mississippi. Part of the cost of building was met by loans from the Davenport patron, which LeClaire later forgave. In 1853, after the completion of the project, Alleman moved to Rock Island and assumed the pastorate of St. Mary's, and during the next six years he was active in establishing other churches. Due to failing health, he moved to Collinsville in 1859, and two years later he returned to the Dominican mother house in Kentucky. His health continued to fail, and he died in St. Louis in 1865. He has left as his memorial a dozen Roman Catholic parishes in Western Illinois alone.[55]

It was largely by such missionary priests, often under the discipline of religious orders, that the Catholic pioneers were sought out—not only sought out, but persuaded without consideration of cost to build proper brick and stone churches in which the faith could be celebrated without transplantation loss. Even this was not all, for immediately schools were established so that coming generations could be nurtured in the centuries-old faith. In this fashion, in Western Illinois as elsewhere, the Church of Rome extended its embrace.

As was noted earlier, there was a deep antagonism between Methodists and Baptists, on the one hand, and the frontier-born Campbellites. A similar antagonism developed between the paternalistic Congregationalists and Presbyterians and all forms of primitivism. The Episcopalians considered themselves possessed of a tradition superior to all the aforementioned. While the Lutherans were seen as an alien cultural group, their religion and way of life was not viewed as a threat to other Protestants (with the exception of the Germans and their Sunday tippling). It was a widely held Protestant attitude, however, that Roman Catholicism was a serious threat to the entire nation. Horace Bushnell had suggested this in 1847 when he considered Catholicism to be the second greatest danger (after barbarism) to the frontier and, in fact, to all of America. In Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa this threat was centered on the parochial schools, which drew not only Catholic students, but often Protestant as well. This led zealous Protestants to insist the Romans were not only serving their own, but proselytizing Protestants.

The greatest organized eruption of antagonism toward Roman

Catholicism occurred in the Mississippi River town of Clinton, Iowa in 1887, with the formation of the American Protective Association. This virulent anti-Catholic organization was brought into being by Henry F. Bowers, who insisted that the mayor of Clinton had been defeated for re-election by the block of Irish votes. This group developed along the lines of a secret, oathbound society, similiar to the then-popular fraternal lodges. Included in one of its oaths is this declaration:

> I hereby declare that I am a firm believer in a Deity. I am not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, nor have I any sympathy with Roman Catholicism: that in my opinion no Roman Catholic should be allowed any part or parcel in the control, or occupy any position in our public schools. On the contrary, I realize that the institutions of our country are in danger from the machinations of the Church of Rome. I believe that only by the removal of Roman Catholics from offices of trust can JUSTICE, RIGHT, and TRUE AMERICAN SENTIMENT be fully subserved; and that by the concerted and continued efforts of the lovers of American liberty only can such results be consummated and continued.[56]

What success the APA did have was in the whipping up of anti-Catholic sentiment, primarily in the rural and Protestant Midwest. Here it did have some influence in several city and some state governments, but its demise occurred rapidly after its secret character was made public in 1893. While it was ostensibly a movement to stop the influence of Roman Catholicism, what its supporters often really had in mind was to stop the flow of Roman Catholic immigrants. Those who sought this were threatened by the waves of immigrants in a time of embittered class conflict and social and economic frustration.[57] Religion thus became the tool by which economic fears could be addressed.

The early decades of settlement in Western Illinois were indeed marked not only by denominational competition, but also by antagonism between various religious groups and tension within them. While there was an agreed urgency to establish congregations in this area of the Mississippi Valley, there were also pronounced disagreements as to the nature of the Christianity to be nurtured. The primitivist wanted this unspoiled land to produce a version of the faith that would be native to the area and inspired by Spirit-filled men and women reading the unadorned Scriptures. Thus, in this new Garden of Eden, God would once again raise up the primitive church. The methods for doing this were not necessarily the same as those employed farther east, for the realization developed that a more efficient means—not necessarily compromising the faith—was the organization of missionary societies and the employment of men to carry forth the endeavor.

The paternalists had no hesitancy in utilizing mission societies that employed formally educated men to bring the carefully

developed Christian tradition into the wilderness. Their objective was to impose upon this region the faith and culture that had been developed by prior generations in other areas, so as to perpetuate a continuity with the past. Even as Western Illinois was to become a reflection of prior Christian culture, there were those who wished that the reflection might more accurately resemble what they considered to be the true tradition, rather than what they had known in their former home. In spite of conflicting theologies, methods, and attitudes, or at times because of such factors, denominational Christianity planted firm roots in the soil of Western Illinois.

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THE BLACK HAWK PURCHASE: STIMULUS TO THE SETTLEMENT OF IOWA, 1832 - 1851

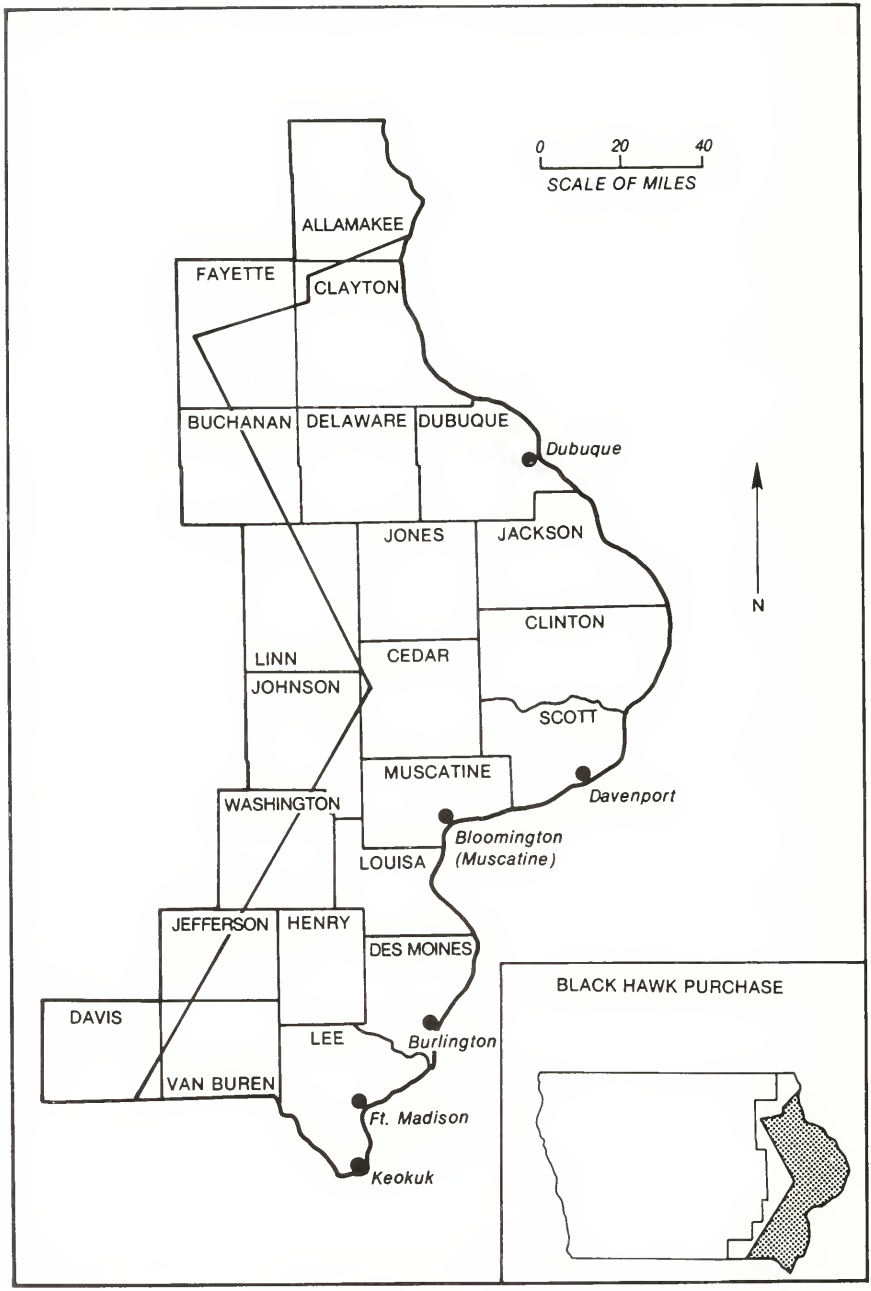
Ronald Rayman

The end of the Black Hawk War in late summer of 1832 brought a deep sigh of relief to white settlers in the Upper Mississippi River Valley. The Sac and Fox Indians had been decimated by the conflict and, more significantly, were reduced in strength to a point where they presented no obstacle to white expansion west of the Mississippi River into present-day Iowa.

Concluded in September, 1832, and ratified by the Senate the following spring, the Black Hawk Treaty exploited the tribes' impotence by forcing them to cede a large portion of their territory on the west bank of the Mississippi River. Sometimes called Scott's Purchase after General Winfield Scott who had conducted the treaty negotiations, the ceded area lay in a fifty-mile-wide band encompassing six million acres. Part, or all, of twenty-two future Iowa counties were contained within the purchase, including portions of Allamakee, Buchanan, Davis, Fayette, Jefferson, Linn, Johnson, and Washington, nearly all of Cedar, Clayton, and Van Buren, and the entire counties of Clinton, Delaware, Des Moines, Dubuque, Henry, Jackson, Jones, Lee, Louisa, Muscatine, and Scott. The chief element of compensation paid to the Sac and Fox was a $20,000 annuity allotted for a thirty-year duration. Computed on a simple cost-per-acre basis, the cash price of ten cents per acre was a bargain of incredible dimensions.[1]

This conflict-treaty-land cession progression was a common pattern of settlement and expansion in American history. Drawing upon colonial precedents, the United States, having once obtained land by conquest from innumerable Indian tribes, chose to obtain clearer title to those lands through treaty purchase.[2] Regardless of this pattern's fairness or morality, it was well-established by 1832, notably in that chain of states east of Iowa comprised of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The Black Hawk War seemingly represented nothing more than a continuation of that pattern.

Nevertheless, there were unique facets of Iowa's settlement and eventual statehood in 1846 which were directly attributable to the



Base Map, Black Hawk Purchase.

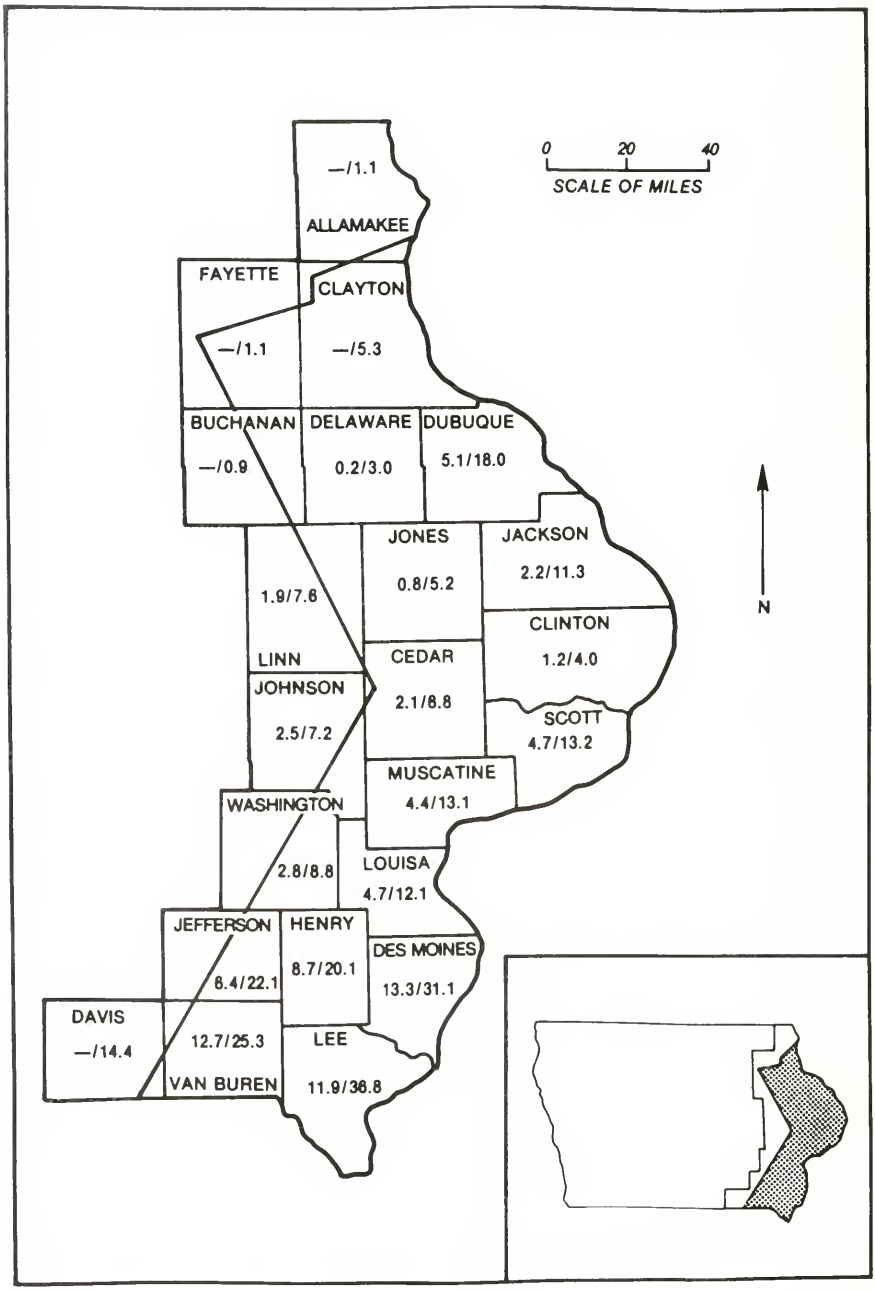
Black Hawk Purchase. These facets set the experience of the Purchase and the state apart from that of other states in relation to factors such as rapidity of settlement and population growth, agricultural expansion and production, and Indian relations.[3]

A discussion of actual settlement in the Black Hawk Purchase is crucial to an adequate understanding and analysis of the region's uniqueness, and its importance to Iowa's pre-statehood development and growth. The Purchase area in 1832 was nearly void of settlement. Only a few scattered enclaves clung to the Mississippi's west bank. Within a decade, however, the complexion of the region changed dramatically. Large numbers of settlers rushed to claim a portion of the fertile, newly-opened region; merchants, traders, bankers, and the rest of society followed soon after. In this fashion, the Black Hawk Purchase acted as a catalyst, stimulating and nurturing the future state's development.

The region's accessibility fed voracious white appetites for virgin lands. Emigrants generally followed one of the major water transportation routes, via the Wisconsin, Ohio, or Mississippi rivers, to the Purchase area. Settlement expanded beyond immediate proximity to the Mississippi by utilizing the interior river system comprised of the Des Moines, Skunk, Iowa, Cedar, Wapsipinicon, Maquoketa, and Turkey rivers.[4] Flowing generally in a northwest-southeast direction, those rivers provided ready access to the future state's rich interior lands. Overland travellers were far fewer in number. They typically reached the purchase via the Chicago or Rockford areas in Illinois, or the Cumberland Road across Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.[5]

An important factor promoting settlement was the influence exerted by early settlers upon friends, relatives, and the population at large. Commercial ventures, particularly land companies, were equally interested in stimulating rapid settlement of the Purchase area. The resulting welter of maps, letters, newspaper advertisements, promotional circulars, and immigrant guides exercised a hypnotic effect upon potential settlers, who could hardly have resisted glowing accounts such as these: "We are now able to comprehend the justness of the remark very generally made by those who have seen the whole of it, that the Black Hawk Purchase, take it all in all, is the best body of land in the world," or "we have a pure atmosphere, a salubrious clime, good soil, large potatoes, fat beef, unctious venison, milk and honey . . . our country abounds with inexhaustible sources of [lead], and most excellent springs are seen rippling from the crevices of the rock."[6]

Rapid population growth was responsible for the area's change as a political entity as well. The region passed successively under the jurisdictions of the Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, and Michigan territories. Incorporated as part of the Wisconsin Territory in 1836,



Population Density (Per Square Mile) 1840/1850.

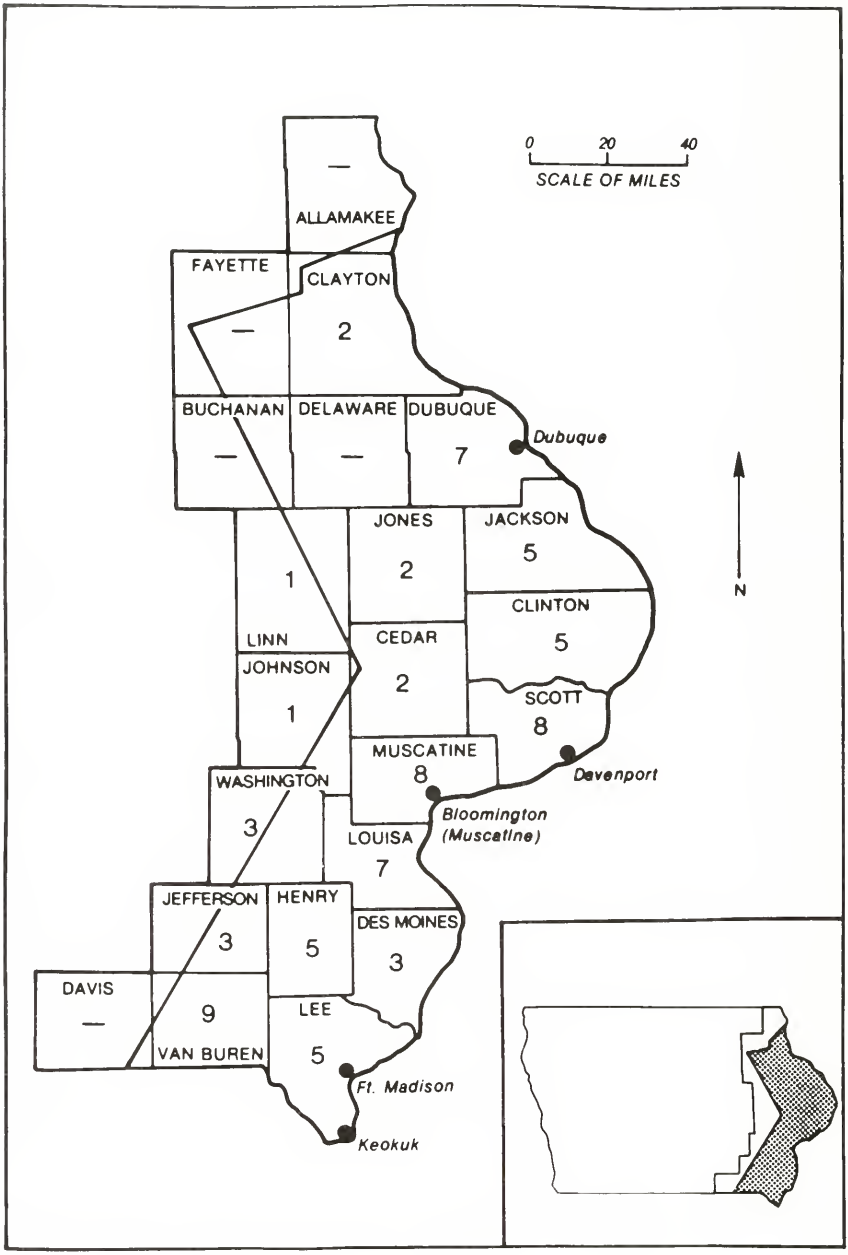
it was soon designated the Iowa Territory on June 12, 1838, as a direct result of the region's burgeoning population.[7]

By 1836, substantial numbers of settlers had arrived at the Purchase. The influx was so great that anxious settlers sometimes waited four or five days for ferry service across the Mississippi River.[8] Steamboat traffic, a favorite means of travel, was equally heavy. One Dubuque newspaper reported in May, 1836, that "the tide of emigration is pouring upon us an immense number of families this spring," for twenty-five groups of passengers had arrived by sixteen different steamboats at that town.[9]

New arrivals were welcomed in the same optimistic, expansive spirit which had initially drawn settlers to the Purchase: "Emigrants are coming in rapidly . . . let them come and we have plenty of room for all them, and a better country, by far than they left, come from where they may."[10] This sentiment found its way into settlers' perceptions of the pioneer experiment of which they were an integral part. Imprinted upon their thinking was a traditional Jeffersonian concept of untainted yeoman farm ownership. Illinois, for example, was denounced as a place where land speculators, "who had never intended to live upon or improve" the lands they had purchased, had driven "emigrants of small means" across the Mississippi River.[11] There, the Black Hawk Purchase offered an opportunity to acquire farms "by mere occupancy and cultivation," free from the speculative abuses which characterized other, less fortunate areas.[12] This romanticized viewpoint was totally inaccurate. As Robert Swierenga has pointed out, "Of all the public land states, speculators were most active in Iowa."[13]

The establishment of post offices and mail routes for the Purchase area also signalled rapid growth. Black Hawk Purchase residents constantly bombarded the federal government with petitions for expanded and improved postal service as early as 1833, citing the "densely populate state of the country on the west side of the Miss[issippi] River" as justification for the expenditures.[14]

Dubuque garnered the first post office. Established May 27, 1833, it preceeded the Purchase's official opening to settlers by five days. A second post office opened for business at Peru, Dubuque County, in August, 1833, but the government approved only one new post office per year in both 1834 and 1835. Soon after the federal survey began, the flow of settlers reached flood stage, a flood reflected in the rising demand for additional postal services, and the subsequent establishment of new post offices. From the four offices put into operation during 1833-1835, the number increased an additional seven in 1836, eighteen in 1837, eleven in 1838, fourteen in 1839, and twenty-two in 1840. For the period 1833-1840, seventy-six post offices and 919 miles of postal routes were approved and put into operation.[15] By comparison, this postal expansion far



Post Offices Established, by County, 1832-1840.

exceeded similar development in Illinois (9 post offices, 388 miles of postal routes), and Indiana (16 post offices, 609 miles of postal routes).[16]

Postal service remained a constant source of concern and discussion among Purchase residents. Newspapers, themselves an important matter, frequently printed information on the mails. The establishment of new offices, the appointment of postmasters, and letters to the government pleading for improved and expanded services to meet the needs of a mushrooming population, were common topics of interest. Local post offices printed long lists of unclaimed letters in the newspapers as well. One Burlington list in 1837 tallied letters for 233 individuals totalling over 250 pieces of mail.[17] The mail's great importance was poignantly underscored in a newspaper report headed "The Mails":

> Don't be alarmed, reader, at the mention of this word; we shall not read you a homily again upon that subject. You are tired of it, doubtless, and so are we; and if nothing can be done for our relief, there is no use saying more about it. We must submit to our hard fate; we must content ourselves with being . . . as far as the mails are concerned, out of the Union—farther from "any place" than inhabitants of the moon.[18]

From earliest settlement to Iowa statehood, the Black Hawk Purchase was responsible for sparking a spectacular regional population growth. An estimated 14,000 inhabitants lived in the Purchase area by 1837, yet the federal government had not sold a single acre of land there.[19] This land rush ultimately accelerated Iowa's population growth at a far more rapid rate than in any neighboring state except Wisconsin.[20]

Population analyses are possible by utilizing federal population returns and estimates for state comparisons. The regional population stood at 43,000 in 1840, and it reached 102,000 at the time of Iowa statehood six years later in 1846.[21] At similar stages of state development, Illinois' population was 12,000 in 1810, and that figure had climbed to only 55,000 in 1820, two years after Illinois gained statehood in 1818. Comparatively slow growth also marked Ohio's experience, where in 1800, three years preceeding statehood, the population totalled only 45,000.[22] Likewise, Indiana counted 24,500 inhabitants in 1810, and only 64,000 at statehood in 1816.[23]

Within this context, it should be noted that at the time of statehood in 1846, the eleven counties completely within original Black Hawk Purchase boundaries accounted for fifty-three percent of the new state's population. This figure declined to forty-six percent in 1850. Indicative of a gradual westward population shift away from a concentration in the eastern portion of the state, the Purchase area continued to experience a healthy growth rate during the 1840s, and

well into the 1850s.[24]

Population expansion, and ultimately agricultural production, were promoted by a factor other than emigration. The 1840 federal census for Iowa Territory, which recorded a population of 43,000, stated that of the 13,000 employed males, eighty percent (10,400) were employed as farmers. Since one-half of the total male population of 24,000 was under the age of twenty, it is reasonable to assume that an equally large percentage pursued an agricultural vocation and became farm owners or tenants upon entering the labor force.[25] This pool of future farmers provided an important stimulus to settlement and agricultural expansion in the Purchase area and beyond. This was particularly true of the earliest years of settlement, since male children of farmers acquired their own farms more easily during the early decades of settlement than after 1880.[26]

The region's abundant acres directly affected the growth of population. Cheap land was the magnet which drew great numbers of settlers to the Black Hawk Purchase over a relatively short period of time. Some attempted to found a community at the site of present-day Burlington in the fall of 1832, months before the area was officially opened to settlers on June 1, 1833. Army troops under the command of Lt. Jefferson Davis, later president of the Confederacy during the Civil War, drove the settlers off, and burned their cabins to the ground in February, 1833. Illegal land holding, or squatting, quickly became the commonly accepted means of securing land in the Purchase area. Squatting spawned the much-discussed claim clubs, formed to protect farmers' right of possession.[27] By the time official land surveying got underway, thousands of acres had been occupied, cleared, planted, and crops had been harvested. However, a contemporary contention (put forward in Burlington's petition for a federal land office) that scarcely any decent farmland remained unoccupied in the entire Black Hawk Purchase, was unfounded. Population density statistics for Purchase counties show sparse settlement in many areas, even as late as 1850.[28]

Surveying commenced in October, 1835. The first land offices opened for business three years later in November, 1838, at Burlington and Dubuque.[29] By March, 1839, the Burlington land office had achieved sales of over $400,000. One year later, sales remained brisk. During a single four day period, $76,000 was collected, $60,000 of that amount in specie.[30] Even impecunious settlers eagerly and easily purchased land with borrowed money. A "number of small capitalists" loaned out money for land purchases at "extortionary rates of interest for the use of their money for a short period." At initial sales held at Burlington, for instance, several moneylenders loaned out $100,000 apiece to land buyers at interest rates of forty percent for a one-year period.[31]

Farmers invested far more than just money in their farms. Clearing, plowing, and readying the land for cultivation required enormous expenditures of physical labor: often several years elapsed before any significant crops were harvested. One farmer reportedly cleared and planted seventy-five acres over a three-year period, in the process struggling to overcome obstacles such as the sixty-mile trek he made to the nearest gristmill, and the twenty miles necessary to have his plow sharpened.[32]

Despite financial and physical hardships encountered during the start-up phase, agriculture in the Purchase was firmly rooted by 1840. Total corn crop production for that year indicated the agricultural promise of the region with 1,400,000 bushels harvested. Henry County captured first place in Purchase area corn production with 283,000 bushels, Lee County second (213,000 bushels), and Des Moines County third (190,000 bushels).[33]

Comparisons of corn crops in the Black Hawk Purchase with established agricultural regions to the east are difficult. Differing stages of settlement and agricultural development complicate the task. Nevertheless, extrapolating data obtained for the eleven counties completely within the original Purchase provides a basis for offering comparative conclusions regarding agricultural production. Those eleven counties represented ten percent of the future state's total area. Therefore, by applying a multiplier of ten to 1840 and 1850 corn crop figures, a hypothetical approximation of overall state production for those early years can be projected.[34]

Corn production for the eleven county base area totalled almost 1,000,000 bushels for 1840, and 3,500,000 bushels for 1850. Applying the hypothetical multiplier of ten, crops of 10,000,000 bushels and 35,000,000 bushels are computed for those years.[35] Illinois reported corn crops of 22,500,000 bushels and 57,500,000 bushels, respectively, for 1840 and 1850.[36] Indiana's 1850 corn crop amounted to 53,000,000 bushels,[37] and that of Ohio 59,079,000 bushels.[38] Worth noting is the fact that Illinois and Indiana had been states for over three decades by 1850, and Ohio four decades, while Iowa had enjoyed statehood only four short years. Iowa remained undeveloped in comparison to her eastern neighbors. Considered in this light, Iowa's early corn production compared favorably with both states. Iowa's corn crop continued to gain on Illinois and Indiana as settlement, land holding, and general agricultural development progressed. In 1870, Iowa still lagged behind with a yearly corn crop of 93,415,000 bushels, compared to Illinois' 210,378,000 bushels and Indiana's 113,150,000 bushels.[39] However, the 1870s witnessed a spectacular reversal of those rankings. Iowa corn production soared to 260,192,000 bushels, while during that same ten year period, Illinois and Indiana corn production increased

only to 240,452,000 bushels for the former, and actually decreased to 99,229,000 bushels for the latter.[40]

The dynamic processes of regional population growth, agricultural expansion, and eventual Iowa statehood largely owed their existence to the initial impetus provided by the Black Hawk Purchase in 1832. The Black Hawk Purchase also dictated the course of regional Indian affairs. The Purchase only temporarily appeased the insatiable white hunger for Indian lands, at the same time acting as a springboard to further white encroachments on Indian lands to the west. After 1832, additional treaties and land cessions forced upon the hapless Sac and Fox quickly followed in 1836, 1837, and 1842, joining an earlier treaty negotiated in 1830. The Potawatomi ceded their remaining territory in western Iowa in 1846, and a treaty with the Sioux in 1851 ended the last Indian claim to lands in Iowa. Extinguishing those claims had taken twenty-one years, involved three separate tribes, and required seven treaties.[41]

Iowa's experience with the Indian treaty-land cession progression differed substantially from that of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. A significant degree of tribal homogeneity existed in Iowa, a homogeneity which was lacking in the other states. Five of the seven treaties covering Iowa lands involved one tribe, the Sac and Fox. Both Ohio and Illinois were forced to deal with a total of sixteen tribes, and Indiana seventeen, to bring about the same goal of extinguishing Indian land claims in the state.

Dealing with a smaller number of tribes simplified and accelerated the cession process. As a result, fewer treaties had to be negotiated. In contrast to Iowa's seven treaties, Ohio required twenty, Indiana forty-one, and Illinois eighteen treaties. Unlike Iowa, where each treaty and cession followed the last in a fairly orderly pattern, the other three states demonstrated an erratic, helter-skelter succession of treaties. Cessions in those states frequently overlapped, an indication of conflicting, competing tribal claims to identical territory. In Ohio, for example, an 1817 treaty which ceded roughly the state's northwest quarter necessitated fifteen additional treaties spread over a twenty-five year period to secure clear title. Eight separate treaties were needed in Indiana to acquire the southern third of the state. Nowhere was this confusion more pronounced than in Illinois where the state's first three Indian land cessions accounted for one-half of the state's area, but were not even contiguous: eight of Illinois' eighteen total treaties-land cessions overlapped at least once. Finally, the length of time required to accomplish the extinguishment process was a revealing comparison of the fundamental differences of relative speed by which a state was settled. The process took twenty-one years in Iowa, fifty-seven years in Ohio, fifty-five years in Indiana, and thirty years in Illinois.[42]

The Black Hawk Purchase represented far more than simply an Indian land cession. It fostered a frontier experience not shared by states such as Illinois, Indiana, or Ohio. Through a unique amalgam of factors such as location, accessibility, and fertility, the Purchase paved the way for unprecedented regional population growth, rapid agricultural expansion and development, swift elimination of Indian claims to adjacent territory, and eventual statehood for Iowa.

NOTES

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[1] *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883,* ed. Charles Kappler (New York: Interland Publishing, 1972), p. 349; *U.S. Statutes,* VII, 734; and William J. Petersen, *The Story of Iowa* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1952), I, 144.

[2] Joe D. Webber, "Indian Land Cessions Within the Northwest Territory," *Illinois Libraries,* 61 (1979), 507.

[3] Cardinal Goodwin noted: "The acquisition of this territory marks the real beginning of white settlement in Iowa," in "The American Occupation of Iowa, 1833-1860," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics,* 17 (1919), 85.

[4] William L. Harter and R. E. Stewart, *The Population of Iowa, Its Composition and Changes: A Brief Sociological Study of Iowa's Human Assets* (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1930), pp. 7, 10; Petersen, *The Story of Iowa,* I, 356-58; and Robert P. Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits: Land Speculation on the Iowa Frontier* (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 7-8.

[5] Petersen, *The Story of Iowa,* I, 358; and Swierenga, p. 7-8.

[6] John Plumbe, *Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin* (1839; rpt. Des Moines: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1948), p. 67; and *Dubuque Visitor,* 14 Sept. 1836, p. 3.

[7] *Official Iowa Register 1969-1970,* pp. 475-76.

[8] *Iowa News,* 3 June 1837, p. 3.

[9] *Dubuque Visitor,* 11 May 1836, p. 2.

[10] *Wisconsin Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser,* 14 April 1838, p. 3.

[11] *Iowa News,* 10 June 1837, p. 3.

[12] Albert Lea, *Notes on the Wisconsin Territory* (1836; rpt. Des Moines: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1953), p. 14.

[13] Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits,* p. 6.

[14] Petition for Mail Service to West Mount Pleasant, Iowa, 6 April 1838, in *Territorial Papers of the United States: Wisconsin Territory,* ed. John Porter Bloom (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), XXVII, 968.

[15] *U.S. Serial Set,* no. 382, 26 Cong., 2 Sess., *House Documents,* II, 479. Information on Iowa post offices was supplied by James Leonardo, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.

[16] Wesley Everett Rich, *The History of the United States Post Office to the Year 1829* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1924), p. 89. The Illinois and Indiana figures are for the year 1815.

[17] *Wisconsin Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser,* 20 July 1837, p. 4. Other lists printed on 31 August 1837, pp. 3 and 4; 14 Sept. 1837, p. 3; and 5 Oct. 1837, p. 1.

[18] *Wisconsin Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser,* 12 Oct. 1837, p. 3. See also Ronald Rayman, "Frontier Mail Service in the Upper Mississippi River Valley," *Postal History Journal,* 21 (October, 1977), 11-20.

[19] *Iowa News,* 3 June, 1837, p. 3; and Petersen, *The Story of Iowa,* I, 356.

[20] Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits,* p. 7.

[21] Iowa Secretary of State, *Census of Iowa for 1880* (Des Moines: F. M. Mills, 1883), 168. This source is sometimes referred to as the *Iowa Historical and Comparative Census, 1836-1880.* For bibliographic accuracy and purposes of standardization, the cited title will be used throughout.

[22] United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1975), I, 27, 33, 39.

[23] John B. Connor, *Indiana Agriculture* (Indianapolis: W. B. Burford, 1893), p. 3.

[24] *Census of Iowa for 1880,* 196-98.

[25] 1840 Federal Census for Iowa Territory, National Archives and Records Service, microfilm series M704, Roll 1, frame 2.

[26] Seddie Cogswell, Jr., *Tenure, Nativity, and Age as Factors in Iowa Agriculture, 1850-1880* (Ames: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 38-41.

[27] Petersen, *The Story of Iowa,* I, 294-95. For information of claim clubs, see Allan G. Bogue, "The Iowa Claim Clubs: Symbols and Substance," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* 45 (1958), 231-53; and "Early Land Claims in Des Moines County," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics,* 10 (1912), 255-60.

[28] Petition of 19 January 1836, in *Territorial Papers of the United States: Wisconsin Territory,* XXVII, 9-13.

[29] Alonzo Abernethy, "Iowa Under Territorial Government and the Removal of the Indians," *Annals of Iowa,* 3d ser., 7 (1906), 440-41; and Plumbe, *Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin,* pp. 65-66.

[30] *Niles' National Register,* 2 May 1840, p. 131.

[31] Swierenga, *Pioneers and Profits,* pp. 11-12.

[32] *Niles' National Register,* 7 Sept. 1839, p. 21.

[33] *Census of Iowa for 1880,* pp. 278-80, 284-86.

[34] Corn quickly became the agricultural staple and preeminent cash crop. Wheat, which had been grown throughout the Purchase in limited acreages, declined in importance as a major crop. However, wheat yields were consistently higher in the Black Hawk Purchase than in other states to the east. Harvests of 25-30 bushels per acre were common, as compared to 8-9 bushels for Indiana, and 18 bushels in Ohio: Charles William Burkett, *History of Ohio Agriculture* (Concord, New Hampshire: Rumford Press, 1900), p. 73; Connor, *Indiana Agriculture,* p. 18; Lea, *Notes on the Wisconsin Territory,* p. 13; and Plumbe, *Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin,* p. 47.

[35] *Census of Iowa for 1880,* pp. 278-80.

[36] J. D. Baker, "Address of J. D. Baker . . . October 11, 1855," Illinois State Agricultural Society *Transactions,* 2 (1856-57), p. 55.

[37] Connor, *Indiana Agriculture,* p. 18.

[38] Ohio State Board of Agriculture, *The Farmer's Centennial History of Ohio, 1803-1903* (Springfield, Ohio: Springfield Pub. Co., 1904), p. 15.

[39] United States Department of Agriculture, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for 1870* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1871), pp. 31-32.

[40] United States Department of Agriculture, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for 1880* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1881), pp. 191-92.

[41] Kappler, *Indian Treaties,* pp. 305-10, 474-78, 495-96, 546-49, 557-60, and 591-93.

[42] Joe D. Webber, "Indian Land Cessions within the Northwest Territory," *Illinois Libraries,* 61 (1979), 546-49, 557-58, and 561-63.

WYATT EARP WAS BORN HERE: MONMOUTH AND THE EARPS, 1845 - 1859

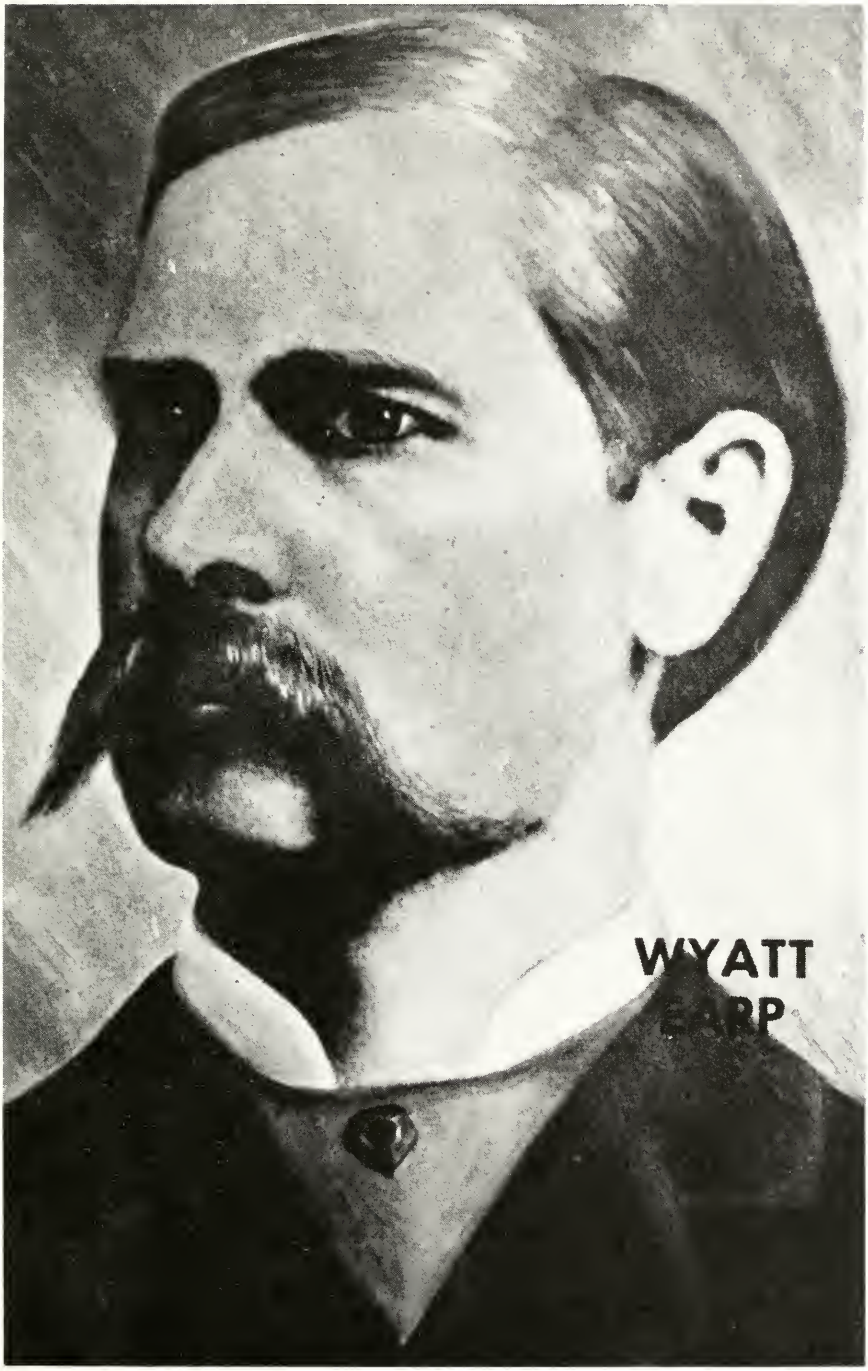
William Urban

Almost every town has a story about someone famous, or near famous, or infamous, who was born or lived there. It was the fortune of Monmouth that one of the legends of the Wild West—Wyatt Earp—was born there in 1848. The town's connection with him was short, but the legend as told by his biographer, Stuart Lake, made it clear that Wyatt was but continuing a family tradition of taming the West:

> Western Illinois, in 1843, was raw frontier, overrun by border ruffians, renegades, and stockthieves who made life hazardous for the peaceably inclined. Insistence that Warren County could rid itself of undesireables, if the law and order faction would show as much spirit as the outlaws, was speedily exemplied by Walter and Nicholas Earp in protecting their own property, and in a fashion which led neighbors to dependence upon them in matters of this kind. Walter was elected Judge of the Illinois Circuit Court; Nicholas was commissioned a deputy sheriff to serve without pay. It has been recorded that Nicholas Earp as a volunteer peace officer established a precedent for fearless efficiency which might well have motivated his more famous son.[1]

The legend of Wyatt Earp, as portrayed in books and on film, was subsequently demolished by Frank Waters, who described Wyatt as "an itinerant saloonkeeper, cardsharp, gunman, bigamist, church deacon, policeman, bunco artist, and a supreme confidence man."[2] The stunning expose, however, did not tell much about Western Illinois and the relationship of the Earp family to Monmouth. Were they pillars of the "law and order" establishment? Or on the other side?

The true story is a complicated one that is made more difficult by the lack of source material. Judicial records in the Warren County courthouse have been misplaced, leaving only the index to cases. Moreover, the editor of the newspaper, C. K. Smith, printed only what he fancied, and he was not one to seek out local news. Thus, while the *Atlas* (founded 1846) is one of the better sources for Mexican War stories, it is useful only sporadically in following the careers of the less prominent citizens of the community. Nevertheless, an outline can be created, thanks to the 1853 obituary



A nineteenth-century sketch of Wyatt Earp.

of Wyatt's grandfather, Walter Earp.[3]

The Earps came to Monmouth in 1845 or 1846. At the head of the family were Walter and his wife Martha, but already each of the five sons was self-sufficient. Walter was sixty-one (born in Montgomery County, Maryland in 1787) and had lived in various locations. He grew up in Virginia, married, and then moved to North Carolina, where three of his children were born. From there, he moved to Russellville and Morgantown, Kentucky, where he taught school and became a licensed preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. From 1825 to 1845 he farmed in Ohio County, Kentucky. Martha was a strong woman, whose nine children all survived to adulthood. A devoted Methodist, converted to the faith by Nicholas Porter (for whom she probably named Wyatt's father), she practiced the fierce Methodism of the frontier, which emphasized an emotional conversion, the mending of erring ways, and the abandonment of vices such as smoking, drinking, and gambling.[4]

The five sons took up various occupations in Monmouth. James (b. 1818), Josiah (b. 1819), and Lorenzo (b. 1809) became farmers, probably leasing land, since no record of any Earp buying land at this date is to be found in the county records. Francis (b. 1821) was a stonemason. Nicholas (b. September 6, 1813) was a cooper and reputedly worked in the store of Wyatt Berry Stapp, a prominent merchant, farmer, and politician.[5]

Lorenzo was apparently the first to come to Warren County, between 1843 and 1846, and he subsequently persuaded the rest of the family to move there.[6] A contradictory story, that Nicholas might have come to the county while serving in the Black Hawk War, can be discounted. His name does not appear among the lists of veterans of that conflict.[7] This story is typical of the problems facing the researcher into the Earp past, for, contrary to Wyatt's later recollections, the family was neither well-off nor prominent in the community. That accounts for the scarcity of information about them in the public records, a scarcity which old timers filled in very imperfectly. Nevertheless, one must be cautious about dismissing too many of the tales about the family. For example, though they did not own land in Henderson County prior to moving to Monmouth, they might well have rented a farm for a short while. (Josiah did live in Bald Bluff from 1854 to 1869, apparently giving rise to this persistent story.) And though they did not have prominent roles in law enforcement, they could well have taken some part which is ignored by the records that survive. Let us, however, abandon the pursuit of rumor and look at the community in which they had chosen to live.

Between 1845 and 1850 Monmouth was a typical prairie town of the era. It was a young community, not yet incorporated. Two main streets crossed at the square. The third courthouse in the brief

history of the county was the principal building. There was a newspaper, a couple stores, a few blacksmiths and livery stables, and some hotels and lodging houses. The lawyers, who were relatively numerous because of the need for clear title to the farms, had offices on the second floors of the principal buildings. The Census of 1850 listed Monmouth's population at 780, a good portion of which were minors. In 1849 the editor of the *Atlas* wrote the following description:

> OUR TOWN
>
> The prospects for building up a town at the county seat of Warren county, were never more flattering than at present. Monmouth is now fast recovering from a too rapid progress which her citizens made some ten years ago, when the town was being built up in advance of the country. Speculation is now gone, and the idea of building up towns in a day is gone with it. During the past summer, several buildings of the most substantial kind have been erected—many of these built several years since have been thoroughly repaired and painted and there is every appearance of a more rapid improvement the coming spring. Heretofore merchants have been much cramped for want of storage room, and a convenient place for packing pork, etc. Two large and commodious buildings for that purpose have just been finished. . . .
>
> Besides these improvements, we may mention that two of the religious societies have each in contemplation the building of a church this coming season. We truly hope they will receive such encouragement from their several denominations and our citizens as will warrant them in the undertaking. A good church is an ornament to any town—it gives dignity and character to a place; and if those who are assembled in it are christians, their example will be an incentive to others to live virtuous and exemplary lives. We would have no one give for the erection of churches, to their own disadvantage, or to the injury of their families, but we hope every one will throw in his mite until the work is done. Let all do something, and the houses will go up. They are needed.[8]

A few months later he complained that the public square was a "nuisance" and recommended that it be enclosed with a fence and seeded with grass or clover: "The 'little folk' then, of whom our goodly town boasts a respectable number, instead of the fear of being jostled or trodden upon by a crowd of people, hogs or dogs, would be safer and, in delight, trip across the protected commons."[9] Young Wyatt, then two, would have been among the crowd of youngsters mentioned.

Wyatt's father was a cooper, probably employed in making barrels for the slaughtered hogs that were sent downriver from Oquawka after being hauled overland from Monmouth. He had five children before coming to Illinois. His first wife, Abigail Storm (whom he married on December 19, 1836), had died on October 8, 1839, leaving him with Newton (b. October 7, 1837) and Mariah Ann (b. February 12, 1839). He subsequently married the nineteen-year-old Virginia Ann Cooley on June 30, 1840, and she presented him with James (b. June 28, 1841), Virgil (b. July 18,

1843), and Martha (b. September 25, 1845).[10]

The first notice we have of the Earps' activities appeared in January of 1847, when the Monmouth "legislature" met to discuss a resolution, presented in the December meeting, expressing opposition to the Mexican War. The Whig majority, which included Walter and Lorenzo "Erp," pressed through an amended resolution which stated: "That the present war was commenced unnecessarily, as the same might have been settled by negotiation; yet we consider it the duty of every American citizen, as we are involved in said war, to endeavour to bring it to a speedy and honorable conclusion on the part of the United States, but reserve to ourselves the right to judge and investigate the necessity of said war."[11]

C. K. Smith of the *Atlas* apparently came to know the Earps better subsequently, for he never again misspelled their name. Considering that they shared many of his views about politics and religion—the Earps were Whigs, supported the Harding-Quinby-Paine-Stapp faction on local issues, and were presumably "dry" on the liquor issue as a result of their Methodist connection—it is surprising how few times their names appeared in print. Nicholas was mentioned on June 11 as having been at the courthouse meeting on the seventh to plan a Fourth of July celebration "with one or more addresses, and a Picknick dinner in the grove near Monmouth, and other appropriate ceremonies." He was one of the committeemen assigned to correspond with and make arrangements for the reception of the volunteers for a company to go to Mexico. Presumably his connection with Wyatt Berry Stapp lay behind this interest, for he subsequently enlisted as 3rd sergeant in Stapp's company and in August left for Quincy, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Mexico.[12] Stapp had long been associated with the local militia, and the tragic death of his young wife in February had affected him greatly. The need to travel, perhaps to fight, was strong. Nicholas' reason for departure was never mentioned. Certainly it was not easy to ignore the weekly stories of the war, for the *Atlas* was filled with articles taken from other newspapers and with letters from local men. Nor did the editor hesitate to enter recruiting notices:

> VOLUNTEERS FOR MEXICO!
>
> Is there anybody here for General Taylor?
>
> CITIZENS OF WARREN, KNOX, HENDERSON AND MERCER: Another call has been made upon the people for volunteers for Mexico. Shall we respond to that call? Ample provision has been made by congress for the pay and maintenance of the troops and there is a fair prospect for active employment. Our friends and brothers, under the command of General Taylor, are in danger. A handful of men, brave and noble spirits, with Taylor at their head, are surrounded by a large and well appointed army. Will we not fly to their rescue? There is more fighting to be done—more laurels to be won. Santa Anna is there in

> large forces: but Taylor, and Scott, and Worth are also there, to lead us to victory. A company of Dragoons would be received, if reported soon. We propose to raise such a company. All those wishing to volunteer can report themselves at Monmouth, to the following volunteers, who will keep the muster rolls, viz:
>
> W. B. Stapp
> G. W. Palmer
> G. C. Lanphere[13]

The *Atlas* had praise enough for the ninety-one men who were to wear the dark blue roundabout trimmed with yellow, the light blue pants, and the blue cloth cap: "We need not say to the volunteers, that they are going to Mexico to prove that Illinoisians are brave and intelligent—but it may be well to remind them, that they go to maintain the honor of our state, and prove to the unenlightened Mexicans, the superiority of a true Republican soldiery, both in word and in deed."[14]

Nicholas was not mentioned prominently in any of the dispatches or letters. His name appeared on the muster roll printed August 27, three weeks after the unit departed, and then it vanished. The Monmouth dragoons were not given exciting duty, having arrived too late to participate in Scott's expedition to Mexico City. They were assigned to patrol the roads between Vera Cruz and Jalapa, and whenever a skirmish did occur, Jack Hayes' Texas Rangers insisted on doing the fighting. The Illinoisians, consequently, had no one killed in action during their nine months in Mexico. On the other hand, they lost nineteen men to disease, and sixteen had to be sent home to recover from serious illnesses. Nicholas was among this latter group, being discharged in December of 1847. (In 1877 he wrote that he had been disabled, kicked in the groin by a mule.) He arrived back in Monmouth in February of 1848.[15]

A month after Nicholas returned, on March 19, 1848, his wife presented him with a son. He named him after his commander, Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp.

In the meantime Walter Earp had attained a post of some small distinction in the community, being one of the three men elected Justice of the Peace.[16] His duties were minor, and rarely made their way to public notice. Periodically there was a short marriage announcement in the *Atlas*—such as, "MARRIED. On the 15th inst. two miles North of Monmouth, by Walter Earp, Esq. . . ."[17]

Presumably he also participated in the popular outcry against liquor shops: "A large and respectable meeting of the citizens of Monmouth, held at the courthouse . . . for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of granting a license to sell ardent spirits by the dram. . . ."[18] After this resolution was passed, arrests for violation of the drinking ordinace became common, and may have given the impression that a crime spree had begun.[19]

Monmouth residents were already upset by what they considered

a high degree of lawbreaking. Although the number of crimes reported is quite small, farmers were very concerned about horsetheft. Already in Knox and Henderson counties protective societies had been formed, and there had been a small civil war in the Massac county between "Regulators" and "Flatheads," won by the former through combined use of trials, whipping, and tar and feathers.[20] In Monmouth, however, the crime wave was mostly psychological. Josiah Whitman, discovering his horse missing, hurried into town to order handbills describing the animal and offering a reward for the thief, only to return to his farm and discover his horse had hidden itself in some timber.[21] The warning "HORSETHIEVES TAKE CARE" was only an indication that people were upset. And when a protective society was organized nearby, the Earps were not mentioned as either organizers or members.[22] To the embarrassment of the community, when a horsethief was finally arrested, tried, and convicted, he promptly escaped from the jail.[23]

Crime was not the problem of the period, and the Earps had no opportunity to become famous lawmen in western Illinois. The principal problem was to build a community while California and Oregon lured away numerous young people. The *Atlas* editor must have been a frustrated man, on the one hand running story after story about gold fields and fertile farms, which was necessary to sell papers, and at the same time attempting to discourage emigration. Nichols reputedly longed to go to the West, but the trip was too long and too expensive. However, he did move a little further in that direction, to Iowa, in 1849.[24]

The year he left Monmouth was an exciting one for the community. A railroad boom had begun in October of 1849 and culminated in a public meeting in December to organize the Peoria and Oquawka Railroad. Wyatt Berry Stapp was prominent among the boomers.[25] In January of 1850 a proposal for township organization was introduced. And a crackdown on liquor consumption was soon conducted. Monmouth was about to become a town, and later, in September of 1852, the citizens voted 139-19 to incorporate the city.[26]

The Earps who remained in Monmouth were not prominent citizens. Francis was elected a delegate to the Whig County Convention in August of 1851, but it was Paine who was elected to attend the State Convention. However, they were a reputable family—clerks, gardeners, drovers, express drivers, and livery stable workers. Walter C. Earp was elected constable and sworn into office March 8, 1851; and Francis Earp served as town marshal in 1855.[27] Walter Earp merited a respectable obituary at his death on January 30, 1853:

Pioneer Cemetery, Monmouth.

> Died—in this city, of apoplexy, on Sunday morning last, WALTER EARP, Esq. aged 66.
>
> Mr. Earp ate his breakfast and went to his office as usual on Saturday morning, where he was found soon after vomiting and nearly insensible. He was immediately removed to his place of residence and a physician was called, but death had commenced its work, and on the following morning died with scarcely a struggle. In the afternoon of the same day his remains were followed to the grave by a large circle of relatives and friends, deeply lamenting his sudden demise. Since his residence here, he has possessed the confidence of our citizens, who have elected him to the office of justice of the peace. He has been a member of the Methodist Church for the last 45 years and was highly esteemed for his upright and Christian deportment, which he carried into his daily business transactions.[28]

Although apparently sickly for many of her early years, his widow survived until September 24, 1881. She grew stronger and healthier, and was deeply involved in the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Walter and Martha Earp were buried in the pioneer cemetery near Monmouth College. The small headstone that marked the plot was stolen in 1960. Only the fragment of a child's marker remains at the site.[29]

Nicholas returned to Monmouth in early 1856.[30] Whether he had done poorly in Marion County, Iowa, or wanted to educate his children in a booming community that now boasted a railroad, a

public school system, and a college, or to seek employment, is not known. He was not prominent in the community, although he was one of the founders of the Republican Party in Monmouth, joining with the leading former Whigs to organize a Fremont Club on September 13, 1856. And he was one of the committee of three that circulated papers and helped to organize the huge rally of eight to ten thousand Republicans that gathered in Monmouth on October third of that year to hear Governor Grimes of Iowa speak.[31] His daughter Virginia was born during this stay, in 1858,[32] and in April of that year he ran a respectable third in the election of constables.[33] In early 1859 he returned to Iowa with his family.[34] Wyatt and his brothers must have attended public school in Monmouth for these two years.[35]

Monmouth was not forgotten. When the Civil War broke out, the two elder boys left home to enlist in Warren County regiments: Virgil in the 83rd (being remembered fondly by the editor of the *Evening Gazette* as late as 1900), and James in the 17th Volunteer Infantry. Wyatt reputedly was left in Iowa to manage the farm, being but fourteen years of age in 1862.[36]

That ended the connection of Wyatt Earp with Monmouth, Illinois. Although legend—through Stuart Lake—has mistakenly drawn him back in the fall of 1868, to marry "the daughter of a family neighbor to his grandparents."[37] This story, which concludes with the death of his bride in a typhus epidemic, is confused with Wyatt's brief stay in Lamar, Missouri, where he married Willa Sutherland, who died in 1870.[38]

It was there, in Lamar, that he held his first job as a lawman, winning a close election for town sheriff, 137-108.[39] Stuart Lake compounded the confusion by saying that Wyatt had stayed with his grandfather, Walter, who had wanted the young man to study the law with him.[40] It was, of course, impossible for Wyatt to study with his deceased grandfather. But if he had returned to Monmouth, the example of his cousin would not have helped the legend: Lorenzo was convicted of running a saloon and gambling house.[41]

In any case, Wyatt followed his father's example and went West. The Earps were not model citizens—Jim was a saloonkeeper and professional gambler; Warren was a stage driver, who was killed in a saloon quarrel; Morgan was a laborer, stage driver, and gunman, shot in the back while playing pool in a saloon; Virgil was a stage driver, ranch hand, prospector, and town marshal; and Wyatt was simply one of the most successful publicity seekers in American history.[42] Nevertheless, is there an American who has not heard of them? And is there a citizen of Warren County who does not identify Monmouth as Wyatt's birthplace?

What then did Wyatt's family contribute to western Illinois in 1846-1850 and in 1856-1859? Contrary to Lake's statements, they

apparently gave very little beyond ordinary work and citizenship. Walter was a quiet, elderly justice of the peace; his sons were small farmers and laborers; and the numerous grandchildren were too young to do anything worth public notice. They came, they lived, and they died or moved away. Only the legend came back, and it was never an effective force in the community.[43] Although the popular high school principal, later Dean of Men at Monmouth College, Frank Phillips, gave many lectures on Wyatt Earp in the 1950s (and recorded one for posterity, depositing it in the Warren County Library), the legend was too quickly debunked for it to have much effect.[44]

The real Wyatt Earp is what each person believes he was. There seems to be no middle ground—one is either for or against Wyatt and his legend. Certainly there were lawmen in the family, and Civil War veterans too; and Wyatt was tough enough to make the legend believable. Monmouth was torn between those extreme judgments, except in the 1950's, when the Wyatt Earp rage was at its height. At that time, a commemorative plaque was erected at the town park.[45] Today, few persons can point it out.

Over the years, a number of Monmouth residents have stopped in Tombstone, to mention that they were from Wyatt's birthplace, only to get a "cold shoulder," discovering too late that they were in one of the few places in America where Wyatt is not remembered kindly. And the community has occasionally suffered some ridicule, as from *Life's* full page ad for Wells Fargo: "If Wyatt Earp had been less of a rugged individualist, he would have stayed in Monmouth, Illinois."[46] But on the whole the citizens take it well. For better or worse, outsiders have at least heard of Wyatt Earp, and that forms an instant bond between Monmouth residents and the rest of America.

NOTES

[1] Stuart Lake, *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955), pp. 4-5.

[2] Frank Waters, *The Earp Brothers of Tombstone; the story of Mrs. Virgil Earp* (New York: C. N. Potter, 1960), pp. 6-7; Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell, *Great Gunfighters of The Kansas Cowtowns, 1867-1886* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 78-95; Peter Lyons, "The Wild, Wild West," *American Heritage* (August, 1960), 42-47.

[3] Hugh Moffat commented on the reticient habits of the *Atlas* editor, saying, "Perhaps little was going on in the young city. . . ." But he preferred to think that concern was for national topics, information that one could not get by daily conversation. See Moffat's *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Warren County* (Chicago: Munsell, 1903), p. 778; *Monmouth Atlas,* 4 Feb. 1853.

[4] Mrs. William Irvine of Milwaukie, Oregon, has done extensive work on the Earp genealogy. This extensive but chaotic mine of records, letters, obituaries, newspaper stories, and other information was published in a series of mimeographed booklets in 1958. (Cited as *Earp Family Data,* the name given by Mrs. Irvine.) A copy of this is possessed by Ralph Eckley of the Monmouth *Review Atlas.* For Walter's family, see pages 1, 40, 98-104.

[5] Census of 1850 for Warren County, Illinois.

[6] Although the legend says that the Earps came to Warren County in 1843 (Lake, p. 4), the 1850 census for the county indicates that they were in Kentucky as late as 1845. Moreover, obituaries of James, Lorenzo, and Josiah in 1900 and 1901 give 1846 as the date they settled in Monmouth. See Hugh Moffat, "Do You Remember . . ." *Review Atlas,* 29 Oct. 1944, 12 Mar. 1945, and 17 Aug. 1945. Nicholas Earp was certainly in Monmouth by September 20, 1845, that being the date he bought lot two on Block 12 in Monmouth from Nelson Alley. That was on the southeast corner of East Archer and North First Street. (Entry book, vol. 3, p. 174, Recorder's Office, Warren County Courthouse.) His daughter was born five days later. No other Earps purchased lots before 1851, and none purchased farm land. The house at Archer and First was probably Wyatt's birthplace.

[7] See the *Adjutant General's Report. Volume IX: Record of the Services of Illinois Soldiers in the Black Hawk War 1831-32 and in the Mexican War 1846-48* (Springfield: Journal Company, 1902) and *The Black Hawk War 1831-1832,* I, ed. Ellen M. Whitney (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1970). See also footnote 15.

[8] *Atlas,* 23 Nov. 1849. Theodore Carlson explained the slow growth of prairie towns before the arrival of the railroad as a result of the high costs of transporting crops and animals to markets and hauling necessary bulk items such as fencing and lumber. See *The Illinois Military Tract, a Study of Land Occupation, Utilization and Tenure* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1951), pp. 107-09.

[9] *Atlas,* 3 May 1850. On February 22, 1850, a farmer complained about the "number of colts and horned cattle running at large in the streets."

[10] *Earp Family Data,* pp. 38, 99. An attractive picture of Wyatt's mother, "one of the sweetest people that ever lived," was penned by Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp. See *I Married Wyatt Earp,* ed. Glenn Boyer (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1976), pp. 129-32.

[11] *Atlas,* 29 Jan. 1847.

[12] *Adjutant General's Report,* IX p. 308; numerous letters from participants were printed in the *Atlas,* but none, alas, from Earp or which even mention him, other than William Day's letter (25 Dec. 1847), listing him among the disabled at Vera Cruz. The *Atlas,* 11 Feb. 1848, p. 2.

[13] *Atlas,* 2 Apr. 1847.

[14] Ibid., 30 July 1847.

[15] The first application was not successful. Nicholas wrote on his pension application, January 17, 1893: "I received a specific disability occasioned by the kick of a mule in my groin from which I have never recovered, this disability being received at Magdalena, Mexico while in active service for my country. I was also in the Black Hawk War where I also served my country being a survivor of three wars and being of age of 79 years believe am entitled to some consideration from my country." Affidavits were signed by George C. Lanphere (sic) and Richard Hatton, who was with him at the time of the injury. National Archives, cited *Earp Family Data,* p. 37; *Adjutant General's Report,* IX, 308.

[16] *Atlas,* 13 Aug. 1847.

[17] *Atlas,* 23 Mar., 27 Apr., 27 July, 1848; 19 July 1850; 30 July 1852.

[18] Ibid., 17 Sept. 1848; Francis Earp was a member of the Sons of Temperance. Ibid., 8 Sept. 1853.

[19] Ibid., 26 Apr., 1850, and 25 Apr., 1852 (one case of horsetheft, three of larceny, and fifteen of selling liquor).

[20] Ibid., 22 Jan. 1847.

[21] Ibid., 22 Sept. 1847; On August 30, 1850, a burglary was discovered when one of the young thieves tried to return his part of the loot wrapped in a cloth with a note inside

saying that he "repented of his indiscretion," having gone along with his friends under the influence of alcohol. He was soon arrested and his accomplices discovered. More serious thievery doubtless existed, of course, as the September 6, 1850, issue noted when Greenbush organized a protective society: "We regard this movement as a good one, and believe it to be perhaps the only manner in which the horde of thieves and counterfeiters now infesting this portion of the state, can be routed and driven away. Hardly a day passes we do not hear of stealing of some sort in our immediate vicinity or near by. The band has become thoroughly organized, and the actors are so expert that it is with the greatest difficulty that any clue or proof can be got at of sufficient importance to convict those who may be arrested. Horses are taken away as by magic, and nothing more is heard of them; saddles which have been carefully hung up are missing, and no one knows whence they have gone. One of our merchants informed us Tuesday evening that he had missed money from his drawer on several occasions, and upon examing his premises closely, found a window which he had accidentally left unfastened. The money had doubtless gone out the window."

22 Ibid., 6 Sept. 1950. Nor were they among the many "detectives" appointed to hunt out criminals and drunks in the wards. (Ibid., 10 Apr. 1853). Walter C. Earp was a constable in 1851, and in 1855, Francis Earp served as town marshal, according to *The Past and Present of Warren County, Illinois* (Chicago: Kett, 1877), p. 159.

23 *Atlas,* 27 May 1852.

24 Nicholas sold his home to Jerriah Massey on March 1, 1849. Entry book, vol. 4, p. 11; Census of 1850 for Marion County, Iowa, p. 590.

25 *Atlas,* 21 Dec. 1849.

26 Ibid., 4 Jan. and 26 Apr. 1850, and 12 Sept. 1852. In 1841 Ebenezer Welch wrote of Monmouth, "Rum drinking (or rather whisky) is quite fashionable here; it is not uncommon to see boys 8 or 9 years old *drunk,*" in *Prairie State: Impressions of Illinois 1673-1967 by Travelers and Other Observers,* ed. Paul Angel (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 195-200.

27 *Past and Present,* pp. 159, 298; Walter C. Earp gave a $1000 bond on March 20, 1851 (*Review Atlas,* 18 Jan. 1962, p. 4).

28 *Atlas,* 4 Feb. 1853. Lorenzo was appointed administrator of the estate the next day. Box 20, County Clerk's office, Monmouth.

29 Ralph Eckley, "Get Fine Story of the Wife of Walter Earp," *Review Atlas,* 16 Feb. 1956, p. 2.

30 On March 10, 1856, Nicholas purchased Lot 3 in Block 35, and lots 3 and 6 in Block 33, i.e., on South B Street midway between 3rd and 4th avenues on the west side, and on South A Street, on the east side halfway between 2nd and 3rd Avenue. Entry book 6, p. 83.

31 *Atlas,* 19 Sept. 1856, p. 2.

32 1860 Census for Marion County, Iowa, p. 228.

33 *Review,* 9 Apr. 1858.

34 Nicholas and his wife sold their lots, two on February 9, 1859, and the remainder on December 13, 1859. Entry book 7, pp. 266, 305. The Census of 1860 for Marion County, Iowa, p. 288, shows them back in Pella.

35 A letter in the *Review* of May 7, 1858, indicated that 800-1200 children were of school age in Monmouth. Unfortunately, no lists of pupils remain. The public school system had just been introduced in 1855, and in November of 1856 the Union School was opened, with seven teachers. The report was that "schools were crowded." *History of Warren County* (1903), II, 754-55.

36 At the time of enlistment, James listed Monmouth as his place of residence (*Adjutant General's Report,* II, 190). Virgil listed Pulla (sic), Iowa (Ibid., V, 131). See the story in the *Review Atlas,* 11 Nov. 1958, p. 4, which cites a September 29, 1900 article in the

Monmouth *Evening Gazette.* In a letter to the author dated September 1, 1980, Norman Milligan related a youthful conversation with an aged and reticent Wyatt Earp: "I did tell Mr. Earp that I came from the Warren County area. He stated that he had lived there until his middle teens. Also that while his father and elder brothers were away to the Civil War that he tended 90 acres of corn that they had planted before leaving. . . . As I recall, he described the land in corn as being 4 miles west of Monmouth on what I believe was on the north side of the road. They had rented the land."

[37] Lake, pp. 28-29. The local newspapers do not mention a Wyatt Earp in this period; however, only the *Atlas* has a complete run for 1868-1869.

[38] They were married by the Justice of the Peace, N. P. Earp, on January 10, 1870, according to the marriage certificate filed in Book A, p. 35, in the Recorder's Office of Barton County, Missouri. See Also George W. Earp, "I rode with Wyatt Earp," *Readers' Digest* (December, 1958), pp. 181-86. Waters, p. 29, says, "Wyatt got into a serious quarrel with her brothers over her, left town, and drifted into Kansas."

[39] George W. Earp, p. 183.

[40] Lake, p. 29, and "Records Fail to Support All of Earp Story," *Review Atlas,* 28 Jan. 1956, p. 2.

[41] Records in the Recorders Office, Warren County Courthouse, Circuit Court Record for September 17 and 20, 1869, and January 10 and 20, 1870. Book H. p. 491. In the case of "People versus Lorenzo D. Earp" the defendant pled guilty to keeping a gambling house; in return, the other charges were dropped. Later, however, he sued the mayor and police officers for the destruction of property (his liquor) and won trials in 1872 and 1874 that resulted in an award of $2244.86 from the jury ("Do You Remember," *Review Atlas,* 22 May and 22 July 1943). Lorenzo Dow was a feared man in the community. He was suspected of sending a human ear to an enemy and used to ride his horse right into saloons. One old-timer remembered seeing a police officer "driving down the street with his guns blazing as he chased Dow, who was driving a buggy ahead of him." Ace Cecka, "Birthplace of Wyatt Earp," Galesburg *Register Mail* (c. 1956)—a clipping possessed by Ralph Eckley of Monmouth. See also "Do You Remember?" *Review Atlas,* 20 May 1946, p. 4.

[42] Waters, p. 7: "A lifelong exhibitionist ridiculed alike by members of his own family, neighbors, contemporaries, and the public press, he lived his last years in poverty, still vainly trying to find someone to publicize his life, and died two years before his ficitious biography recast him in the role of America's most famous frontier marshal." Glenn Boyer, editor of *I Married Wyatt Earp,* p. 235, calls this book an "extremely bitter and biased account," and he gives several pages to "the making of a villain."

[43] Few adulatory stories appear in the local press, except during the boom-years of the 1950's, because of the television show, and none appear in the several county histories, although there is a continuing interest in the house where Wyatt was supposed to have been born. It stands at 913 South Sixth Street, having been moved from 213 South Third about 1906. Ralph Eckley, on the basis of conversations with "old-timers," believes this to be the birthplace. (*Review Atlas,* 24 July 1956, p. 3.) However, houses at 213, 406, and 913 on South Third Street have been suggested as likely places. (*Ibid.,* 28 June and 17 Aug. 1956, p. 3, and 15 Aug. 1980, p. 1.) See footnote 5.

[44] On November 4, 1881, the Monmouth *Review* (p. 8) ran a story on the Shootout at the O.K. Corral, adding, "The Marshal Earp and his brothers, mentioned above, are sons of Nicholas Earp, formerly one of the early settlers of Monmouth, who moved to Missouri just before the war. His boys show decided pluck, and are the kind of boys to have out in Arizona among the outlaws who infest the western country." Hugh Moffat, who reproduced this in his column "Do You Remember . .," then remarked that he had Lake's biography in his office. (*Review Atlas,* 5 May 1944.) Later, on May 18, 1950 (p. 4), he found another story in the *Review* of July 26, 1911: "Old friends of Wyatt Earp . . . read with interest of his latest mishap in Los Angeles, he having been arrested there a few days ago on the charge

of being implicated in the holdup of a gambling house in which he was employed. . . . Earp has been in the west for many years and has had an eventful career. He has been engaged successively in mining, gambling, a prize fight referee and other vocations and has broken into the headlines several times. On one occasion he refereed a prize fight and his work was severely criticized afterward, arousing a great deal of comment in the sporting world. He has a number of relatives and friends here and they are reluctant to believe that he would be a party to a stick-up game."

Wyatt's popularity and his legend came, of course, from the cheap novels and stories by Ned Buntline, who later gave him the famous "Buntline Special." Hugh O'Brian, who had been a student at Roosevelt Military Academy in Aledo, popularized the Lake portrait in his television series. (Quad Cities *Times-Democrat,* 1 Mar. 1959, section 3d, p. 1.)

45 This was given by the state of Illinois, to be placed on a 9000 pound granite block donated by the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad. (*Review Atlas,* 18 Aug. 1956.) The word "marshal" was, however, improperly spelled with two "l"s, and subsequently the plaque was stolen, and replaced with a corrected memorial. Monmouth was later to figure in another stolen memorial. The tombstone of Wyatt Earp was taken from the cemetery in Colma, California (San Francisco *Examiner,* July 8, 1957). The determined amateur thief got away with the 500-pound stone, but failed to reach the marshal's urn despite five feet of digging. In September a teenager found a properly worded stone, but one weighing only 25 pounds, and allowed it to be displayed in a local restaurant. A stranger soon came in, claimed to be a San Francisco detective sent to retrieve the stone, and then neither the stranger nor the stone were heard of again.

Theft, indeed, seems to plague Earp memorabilia. The Warren County Library has lost most of its vertical file on Wyatt Earp as well as Professor Phillip's record about him.

46 *Life,* 4 June 1971.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL AND THE SENSUAL GODS: AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER

Mark A. Plummer

On February 22, 1870, Robert G. Ingersoll wrote a jocose private letter to his friend, former Illinois governor Richard J. Oglesby, commenting upon the eroticism of the *Rig-Veda-Sanhita* of Hinduism. The letter was recently discovered in the Oglesby Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, and it is published here for the first time.[1] Ingersoll, who later became the best known agnostic in America, was not a prominent atheist in 1870, but the Peorian was reading widely and expressing his more iconoclastic views in private. As he was preparing himself to smash the Jewish and Christian gods, he flirted briefly with the erotic gods of the East, as this unique letter demonstrates.

Although Ingersoll was born (August 11, 1833) and died (July 21, 1899) in the state of New York, his formative middle years were spent in Illinois. The son of an itinerant Presbyterian minister, he moved to southern Illinois in 1851. He attended an academy at Greenville, taught school, and was admitted to the bar in 1854. He moved to Peoria in 1858 and ran unsuccessfully for Congress as a Democrat. During the Civil War he organized a cavalry regiment in Peoria and led his troops into battle in Tennessee. Unfortunately, he led them into the grasp of Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest, who captured Ingersoll and some of his men in 1862. He was paroled by Forrest and, when exchange was not forthcoming, Colonel Ingersoll resigned his commission. General Richard J. Oglesby first met Ingersoll during the Civil War, and they became friends later during the war when Ingersoll switched to the Republican Party in order to support his brother Ebon Clark Ingersoll for Congress and Oglesby for governor. Oglesby was elected in 1864, and when the new office of attorney-general was authorized in 1867, he appointed Ingersoll to the part-time but well-paying position.[2] Over the next decade Ingersoll wrote some thirty private letters to Oglesby which have survived. Most of the letters concern politics but two deal primarily with religion.

The first of these witty letters was written to Oglesby on January 22, 1866, in response to the Governor's "Holy Land" lecture, which

Robert G. Ingersoll, about 1883.

he had been giving since his trip to Europe and the Middle East in 1856-57. "When riding through the wilderness, did you happen to see any of the clothes worn by the Jews which 'waxed not old.' How I should like to see a pair of breeches that would wear forty years . . .," he wrote.[3] Oglesby asked permission to read Ingersoll's fifteen-page letter to his friends. "I do not know when I have read so good a letter," he wrote.[4] Ingersoll later sent Oglesby a copy of Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary.* The latter reported that Sheridan Wait (Oglesby's Decatur law partner) "stold [sic] the Philosophical Dictionary and is entertaining the Revernd [sic] gentlemen of Decatur with it."[5]

On February 22, 1869, Ingersoll wrote to Oglesby from Peoria: "Have your religious ideas *hived* yet, or are they swarming." Oglesby's reply has not survived, but Ingersoll's ideas were swarming. In the spring of 1869 he began giving a revised version of his controversial lecture "Progress." Apparently Oglesby heard it in Bloomington on March 11, 1869, and Ingersoll repeated the oration in Decatur on March 25. The editor of the Decatur newspaper described the lecture as "an outburst of enthusiastic admiration of human REASON as the rightful and supreme sovereign of the world."[6] The speaker "delighted hugely and laughingly in the exciting work of smashing and overthrow," he wrote. But he continued his critique by complaining that too much admiration had been given to Voltaire, Volney, and Bolingbrook while failing to mention "the only true apostle of liberty, the Savior of Mankind. . . . Does the gentleman mean to teach that there is no God but law? This doctrine is not point blank Atheism, but it is practically so," he concluded. Also in 1868, Ingersoll wrote the lecture "Humboldt," and in 1870 he wrote "Thomas Paine." It is probable that this thanks to Oglesby "for the flattering manner in which you refer to my oration" (see below) referred to one of these lectures. A search of the Springfield and Peoria papers for the first three weeks of February, 1870, produced no evidence that an oration was given. Hence, it is likely that Ingersoll had sent Oglesby a copy of the oration in question.

Ingersoll's "Sensual Gods" letter is apparently something of a playful aberration. Although he wrote that he was "a little in love with the religion of Brahma," his subsequent lectures show only a general awareness of the non-western religions. As he later wrote to a Jewish friend, "I have equal prejudice against all religions."[7] In 1874, Ingersoll published his collected lectures, entitled *The Gods, Humboldt, Thomas Paine, Individuality, and Heretics and Heresies.*[8] They show little influence from reading the *Rig Veda.* In 1876 Ingersoll gained national fame because of his "James G. Blaine, the Plumed Knight" nomination speech at the Republican National

Convention and his famous "bloody shirt" campaign speech. This newly-won fame enabled him to attract larger audiences and emboldened him in presenting his agnostic orations. In 1877 Ingersoll left Peoria and joined his brother, former Congressman Ebon Clark Ingersoll, in the practice of law in Washington, D.C. As a lawyer, he successfully represented many unpopular defendants, and during this time, he also began delivering orations which were "point-blank atheism." In 1855 he moved to New York where he became the center of the debate over agnosticism and the anathema of most fundamentalist preachers in the nation. He died in 1899 in Dobbs Ferry, New York, but the only monument honoring him stands in Glen Oak Park in Peoria.

The *Rig-Veda-Sanhita* is the oldest and most important work of Vedic literature. The "Veda of praise" comprise the most sacred and ancient scriptures of Hinduism. Much of the *Rig-Veda* was composed by 1800 B.C., and it is sometimes claimed (as Ingersoll asserted) that it is the world's oldest book. There is no way of knowing what edition Ingersoll was reading. By 1870 F. Max Miller had completed four volumes (of six) of his English translation of *Rig-Veda-Sanhita, the Sacred Hymns of the Brahmas,* but Horace H. Wilson had completed his translation between 1850 and 1866.[9] Because the collection is massive, it is probable that Ingersoll was reading a condensed, popular version of the hymns.

The complete text of the letter is transcribed below. The original punctuation has been retained, except that dashes at the end of sentences have been transcribed as periods.

Springfield Feby 22 [18] 70[10]

My Dear Friend;

I am greatly obliged for the flattering manner in which you refer to my oration. The applause of friends is the very best of pay. I have be[en] reading the Rig-Veda-Sanhita, the oldest book in the world. My mind is full of Maruts, Indias, Vishnus and Aditis.[11] I think of nothing but ghostly embraces, heavenly adulteries, and divine fornications. Gods liable under the bastardy act are as thick as fleas in warm sand. All the divinities of India are at my tongues end. To tell the truth I am a little in love with the religion of Brahma. After all we are rather like gods with passions—with hopes and fears—Gods that fight, suffer and love. Gods with eyes for the beautiful—with hands that have a longing to touch bosoms. Gods that sympathize with us. Give me a God that has kissed moles between breasts; Give me a goddess that has [f]elt the warm mouth of a God at her nipples. I prefer Olympus to Sinai—I had rather show myself to Leda than to Moses. I cannot bear to think that the universe is governed by an infinite *eunuch.* I like mythology better than theology. I had rather carry off a girl on my horns, as Jupiter did, than to teach the art of circumcision. It is better to create than to destroy. The penis is a more delightful weapon than the sword. I had rather make love than war. I had rather be Antony with Cleopartra [sic] than Caesar with Rome. There is nothing better under the sun than to enjoy the fruits of your labor in the arms of the woman you love.

This I consider an end of the whole matter, and from this time henceforth you may consider me a pagan. Every river will have its divinity. In the waves I will see her breasts. Every sweet valley will have its presiding genius, and under the beautiful trees she will recline naked la[s] civious and enchanting. Everywhere I will see white arms—eyes will beckon with amorous glances. I shall be invited to couches of moss. I shall feel myself clasped to bosoms that have the precision of Marble and the undulation of the waves.

I have bid adieu to the cold religions of the North. I have embraced the doctrine of the *sensual.* I shall float away into the roseate depths of eternal Passion—the incarnation of the sexual.

Yours forever Robert G. Ingersoll

I want you to come and stay with me a week, a month, a year. Fix your time.[12] I will arrange my business so that I can be wholly yours.

NOTES

[1] The Oglesby Family Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield (hereafter cited as Oglesby Collection) contains twenty-nine other Ingersoll letters. Twenty-seven of these letters have been published under the title "Goodbye dear Governor. You are my best friend: The Private Letters of Robert G. Ingersoll to Richard J. Oglesby, 1867-77," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,* 73 (1980), 78-116.

[2] The best brief chronology of Ingersoll is in David D. Anderson, *Robert Ingersoll* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972).

[3] The complete text of the "Holy Land" letter is scheduled for publication in the *Illinois Quarterly,* 43 (Fall, 1980).

[4] Oglesby's reply, written from Springfield on 28 Jan. 1867, is also in the Oglesby Collection.

[5] Oglesby to Ingersoll, 11 June 1867, found in Governor's Correspondence, Richard James Oglesby (1st term), Record Series 101.14, Illinois State Archives, Springfield.

[6] Decatur (weekly) *Republican,* 1 Apr. 1869, p. 6.

[7] Ingersoll to the editor of *The American Hebrew,* 4 Apr. 1890, as cited in *The Letters of Robert G. Ingersoll,* ed. Eva Ingersoll Wakefield (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), pp. 691-92.

[8] (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal,* 13 Jun. 1874, p. 2. The orations have been published in *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll,* ed. C. P. Farrell (New York: The Dresden Pub. Co., 1902), I, 7-253.

[9] See James A. Santucci, *An Outline of Vedic Literature* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976). Miller compares his translation to Wilson's in his *Vedic Hymns* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891). See also Geoffrey Parrinder, *Dictionary of Non-Christian Religions* (London: Hulton Educational Publications, Ltd., 1971).

[10] After Oglesby and Ingersoll completed their terms of office in 1869, most of Ingersoll's letters were written from Peoria. This letter may have been written from Springfield because the U.S. Circuit and District Courts were in session. See (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal,* 6 Feb. 1870, p. 3. Ingersoll often represented clients in the Springfield courts.

[11] Indian deities. See Parrinder, pp. 10, 135, 178, 301.

[12] The Decatur (weekly) *Republican* reported on 4 Aug. 1870, p. 2: "Col. R. G. Ingersoll, of Peoria, was in town yesterday visiting with Governor Oglesby." For more information on Oglesby's family and career see my "Richard J. Oglesby and His Decatur House," *Historic Illinois,* 2 (1979), 12-15.

MINE UNION RADICALISM IN MACOUPIN AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

Victor Hicken

Even in the old implications of the word, the 1890's were not "gay." But it was true, especially in the cities, that the middle class enjoyed the almost yearly technological advances which America's prolific inventors were adding to the country's growing advantages. And, if one were willing and able, as well as necessarily brilliant, he or she could fulfill the dream of the standard Horatio Alger plot. It was proven time and time again that children of a middle- or even lower-class family could rise and become rich and successful. With those achievements, of course, came also the admiration and respect of society.

Like a great many aspects of life, the opportunities which America offered were like the proverbial coin of the realm; they had two sides. In the twenty-five years since the end of the Civil War, a laissez-faire society, untrammeled by government regulation, had allowed the rich to become exceedingly rich and the poor to become poorer. Hamlin Garland, a midwestern writer of the period, noted the growing disparity between life on the farm and life in the middle-class towns of the Great Plains. On the other hand, Jacob Riïs, the Danish-American reformer, pointed his finger at the cities and graphically illustrated the terrible discrepancies between life in the ghettos and life among the more privileged.[1]

With respect to Hell's Kitchen in New York, to Murderers' Row in Chicago, and to the drudgery of the American farm, one could write with some assurance that these sides of the coin were not completely invisible. At least, Riïs and Garland saw them, and so did dozens of other writers. If one were to target 1890 as a specific date, one might add that the same could not be said of those who worked the coal pits of America. The coal miner was there, and his numbers were in the tens of thousands and growing by the day. Almost more than anyone else, he represented the unseen American. No one wrote songs about him. He was less a part of American literature in 1890 than were the blacks of both the South and North. Gone from his mining-camp home before dawn and returning to it after dark,

sometimes living in mining villages surrounded by barbed wire, his only comforts were those provided by the sanctity of the bedroom and the consolation found in a bottle.

These facts were true in Pennsylvania and Kentucky, where coal mines had fueled the industrial revolution for years, and they were increasingly true in Illinois where, by 1890, new pits were being opened with increasing frequency. In that state, almost everything was in a feverish state of flux. Even textbooks and newspapers were encouraging the use of the phrase "Prairie State" rather than "Sucker State." Chicago had burned and was rebuilding, becoming what a future poet would call the "city of big shoulders." The big shoulders belonged to newly-arrived immigrants who worked in the steel mills or the factories, and they worked so hard and so long each day that the need of Chicago for more and more coal was an economic fact of life. So did Germanic St. Louis, across the Mississippi River from southern Illinois. Between the two cities ran railroads, and they, in turn, crossed over the rich, black coal fields of St. Clair, Macoupin, Montgomery, and Christian counties—so rich, indeed, that nearly 100 years after their first major economic development, their contents are probably ninety-nine percent intact.

Most of the coal produced in Illinois in 1890 came from three areas of the state: the Spring Valley and Coal City area in the northern half; the St. Clair County area near St. Louis; and that part of Illinois known by tradition as "Little Egypt." Williamson County mines had been opened as early as 1869, and by 1890 the county's coal production had reached 200,000 tons a year.[2]

This is not to say that there was no coal production elsewhere. Indeed, there were some sixty or seventy two- and three-man shallow pits near Colchester, in McDonough County; the coal there was so close to the surface that dogs were used to pull the small drays from the workings to the cave openings. There were also small shafts near Gillespie, in Macoupin County. According to early geological survey maps, most of these had closed operations as early as 1880.

The fact is that coal deposits in Illinois have the subterranean shape of a saucer, with the rim near the surface of the ground in southern and western Illinois. The base of that saucer runs through south central Illinois; hence the need for deeper shafts in that area. Being compressed at a greater depth and probably older, the coal there was of a slightly higher quality. The only problem in the 1870's or 1880's was the lack of mechanized equipment to bring the coal from the face of the seam to the surface, a difficulty which found correction by the development of more mechanized systems to produce the coal. By 1890, the Ellsworth Coal Company was either sinking or considering mines in the Mt. Olive and Staunton areas of Macoupin County. Soon operations were extended by various

concerns to Carlinville, Litchfield, Hillsboro, Witt, Nokomis, and Coalton in both Macoupin and Montgomery Counties.

The extent of the growth of coal production in those two counties can be illustrated by a few figures. In 1906, for example, the Shoal Creek Company sunk its Mine No. 1 at Panama, in Montgomery County. It required eighty-seven workers in its initial year, 230 a year later, 375 in 1908, and 433 by 1910. Over eighty-five percent of its coal in 1910 was mined and brought to the surface by machines.

In Macoupin County, the Inspector of Mines reported in 1910 that there were twenty-two mines in operation, seventeen on which were shipping coal to various industrial centers elsewhere. Four of the shipping mines were in or around Virden, one was at Girard, one was at Carlinville, one at Nilwood, one at Green Ridge, three at Gillespie, two at Mt. Olive, and four near Staunton. It might be added parenthetically that two other mines lay just across the Madison County line from Staunton, and that most of the men who worked in them actually lived in that Macoupin town. The total coal production of all Macoupin mines in 1910 was 4,040,436 tons, and all twenty-two mines employed a total of 4,681 men. Once again, parenthetically, the inspector reported one revealing statistic: of the total number of miners employed in the shafts, some 150 boys were among them, although no age levels for this group were given.[3]

Villages and small settlements became minor boom towns overnight. Between Gillespie and Staunton pit villages appeared carrying the names of Benld, Sawyerville, Eagerville, and Mt. Clare. The first of these took its name from the ineptitude of an itinerant sign painter who fell while attempting to paint the name of a mine developer, Ben L. Dorsay, on the tipple. He was hurt and unable to finish his work, and so, from that point on, the settlement was known as Ben L. D., the first five letters of the mine owner's name.

Working the deeper pits of Macoupin and Montgomery counties was considerably different than the effort required in many of the shallow mines in southern Illinois. The labor pool which fed these new mines was principally immigrant, and the workers came from every European country, including Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Italians and Russians flocked to Benld, the presence of the latter being marked by the continuing presence of a quaintly beautiful Orthodox church. Croatians, Serbians, Bohemians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Letts, Lithuanians, Germans, and British also came. While not seeking to demean the hard working and ambitious immigrants from other lands, it would be fair to say that the more skilled deep-pit miners and, indeed, the most activist in terms of the mine unions were those from Scotland, Wales, England, and Ireland.

Consider the case of the Panama mines. Of the 1,500 people living in that Montgomery County town in 1910, the predominant ethnic group was Italian, with a score of other elements represented in lesser numbers. Yet, with all of this ethnic variety, only one name is remembered out of that hectic period, and that is John Llewellyn Lewis, of Welsh heritage from Iowa. Those British who came to work the mines around the turn of the century were hard-bitten, acerbic, and cynical men who had already cut their teeth on the emerging trade unionism of Britain. As one Scot remarked some forty years after settling in Gillespie, "When I came to America to work in the mines, I was determined never to tip my cap to the man who owned the mine."[4] It is strange but true that after all of the blood and the suffering of miners in this country, the only great novel to which American miners might relate is *How Green Was My Valley,* written by Richard Llewellyn. It is a moving story about mining and mine unionism, not in the United States but in Wales.

Early evidence of the militancy of the new immigrants to Macoupin County was shown in the coal strike of 1894. Although the bankrupt United Mine Workers accepted the offer of operators in early June, miners of southeast Illinois simply refused to obey the agreement. On nine different occasions the state militia was sent to various parts of the region to quell disturbances. These actions by the governor brought commendations from some newspapers, particularly the *Chicago Tribune.* That paper argued that, under the circumstances, perhaps the new and troublesome immigrant workers might be speeded back to the lands of their birth. The militia was especially needed in the Mt. Olive area of Macoupin County, for there the miners had continuously interfered with trains carrying coal from the nonunion fields of the south.

Some of this activity may have been inspired by a fascinating character named Alexander Bradley. Sometimes claimed by Mt. Olive, and later nicknamed "the General," Bradley was an Englishborn, nebulous character who flitted in and out of mine issues for over forty years. Always flamboyantly dressed, he was a quadrennial candidate for one office or another on the Socialist ticket, and he played a part in one of the most violent episodes in Illinois mining history.[5]

What Bradley and others saw in the mine fields of Illinois was a kind of industrial feudalism supported by both the law and the political establishment. The famous muckraker, Henry D. Lloyd, described the system as a "pustule of a disease spread through the whole body." The average annual income of a Macoupin or Montgomery County miner in 1897 was approximately $190. For this he worked 179 ten-hour days each year. Out of this princely sum the miner supplied his own tools and his own transportation. This

reason alone would account for the militant willingness of Macoupin and Montgomery County miners to join the United Mine Workers coal strike of 1897.[6]

Some six months later, in 1898, the operators settled on terms which were considered as a victory for the union. But the ordeal was not over. Led by operators who owned mines stretching along the Chicago and Alton Railroad, a segment of management balked at the new contract. Strongest among the protestors were the Chicago-Virden Coal Company and the Pana Coal Company. The former was a power to be reckoned with. Its mine at Virden was the largest single producer in the state, hoisting 348,000 tons a year prior to the 1897 strike. Even when a national board returned findings in favor of the miners, both the Virden and the Pana companies argued that they simply would not accept the findings.

Through the early months of 1898, the situation at Virden and at Pana went from bad to worse. The Pana company attempted to employ nonunion white labor in an effort to work their mine, but Christian County resistance was so great that the company quit the effort. The same company, and possibly some agents of the Chicago-Virden Company as well, then tried to recruit Chinese labor in California. The results were fruitless. Finally, in August, both companies resolved to import black labor from Alabama. By promising conditions which might have astounded the white strikers in Pana and Virden, agents soon rounded up a trainload of black miners from the Birmingham region of that state.

All along the route through southern Illinois, the strike organizers of the United Mine Workers succeeded in boarding the northbound train, and in warning the imported strikebreakers that their lives might be in peril further north. Indeed, some shots may have been fired along the way, for the guards riding shotgun were forced to compel their passengers to lower the blinds and not to show their faces under any circumstance. Despite all attempts of the union, and even despite the warnings of Governor Tanner, who issued a statement on behalf of the union, the Pana Company managed to sneak its train into Pana and to house their strikebreakers behind a stockade near the struck mines.

The Chicago-Virden Company quickly followed suit, erecting a stockade which, in aging photographs, tends to resemble something Jim Bridger might have thrown up near the North Platte or on the wide Missouri. The company went one step further, hiring fifty professional gunfighters from Chicago and St. Louis. Fitted out with shiny new Winchester rifles, these men were stationed about the mine and even on the tipple in order to protect the train which was about to arrive.

Of course, all of these preparations were in the way of a signal to

the striking miners and their supporters in Macoupin County. Led by the ubiquitous General Bradley, hundreds of miners from Gillespie, Benld, Staunton, and particularly Mt. Olive poured into the Virden area. The train puffed into sight at the appointed hour, but the engineer, blessed with more wisdom than valor, puffed right out again in the direction of Springfield. All of those men, vicious in their righteous indignation and armed with weapons ranging from pitchforks to shotguns, seemed too much of an obstacle.

Still the Chicago-Virden Company persisted despite the efforts of various local authorities north of Virden who attempted to dissuade the company from its goal. Sixty blacks were taken off the train at Tower Hill, fourteen others at Minonk, and the train was even shunted onto a sidetrack at Galesburg in order to thwart the attempt to break the strike.

Finally, on October 13, the Chicago-Virden Company made its final assault upon the besieged stockade. The train rolled southward and finally into Virden, where it was halted next to the fort. Both the hired guards and the strikers opened fire at once and the scene became, according to one observer, reminiscent of the fighting at San Juan Hill some months earlier. When the engineer once again opened his throttle and backed up in the direction of Springfield, and when the smoke had cleared, it could be recorded that the human sacrifice had been significant. Seven miners were killed and between thirty and forty were wounded. Of the guards, five were killed and four wounded. No injuries were incurred among the blacks.

Governor Tanner quickly sent the militia into the area, with orders to prevent violence and to thwart any further attempts to bring in strikebreakers. What happened to the blacks? Most stayed in Illinois, either settling in Springfield or moving up to Chicago. As far as the miners were concerned, their victory was both sweet and tragic. They now had the martyrs any movement had to have, and one month later in Virden, the company finally agreed to pay the higher wage scale. It was a victory for militant unionism, although won at a high cost. A short time later, a visitor to these same Illinois mine fields affected by the strike was to note an absence of pet dogs and cats. The truth was that there were none. They had all been eaten.[7]

The aftermath of what came to be known as the "Virden Massacre" was an explosion of fact into myth. The murdered "boys of Virden," as Mother Jones called them, seemed to grow in number with each decade. Yet their martyrdom seemed undeniable to most Macoupin County miners. A month after the fight at Virden, a State Militia captain described the striking miners at Virden as mostly "Slavonic" who were impossible to "educate and elevate." He was partially right in the sense that some of the miners were Slavic in

Mother Jones, with Knights of Labor leader Terence Powderly.

descent, but the nationalities of four of the dead who came from Mt. Olive is a story unto itself. Two had pioneer backgrounds or were British (Long and Smith), and two were Germans (Gitterle and Kaemerer). For some inexplicable reason, all four were denied burial in the town's established cemeteries, so their comrades were forced to buy an acre of land in which they might be interred. Some twenty years later, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones made a dedicatory speech for this Union Cemetery, and in it she stated, "I hope it will be my consolation when I pass away to feel I sleep under the clay with those brave boys." Her wishes were eventually fulfilled, and today she rests in Mt. Olive with the "boys of Virden."[8]

Perhaps it was as Mrs. Jones had intimated in her 1923 speech at Mt. Olive: that the martyrdom of the Virden boys had created such a militancy in what was now called District 12 of the United Mine Workers that it would draw special attention from mine operators. Or perhaps it was that the better working conditions in District 12 simply developed because big capital found it to be a profitable area in which to mine coal. At any rate, the growth in coal production and the numbers of mine sinkings after 1898 in both Macoupin and Montgomery Counties were quite substantial. The most significant of these were those mines developed by the Superior Coal Company, a

subsidiary of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Four major tipples were constructed at Eagerville, Sawyerville, Mt. Clare, and at Wilsonville. The last, Superior's No. 4, was partially a response of the World War I demand for fuel. Hence the reason for naming the town Wilsonville. Of the four mining villages, this last was the source of the most labor trouble for the Superior Company. It was also a little village which, as voting statistics show, harbored more political radicals than the larger towns in the county.[9]

That big capital had discovered the possibilities for enormous profits in coal in southern and central Illinois is shown by the fact that Joseph Leiter and John "Bet-a-Million" Gates could be numbered among the new investors. Leiter, a Chicagoan and typical of the *nouveau riche* of his time, was famous not only for his wealth but also for his wife, a woman whose tongue sometimes belied her social status. Malapropisms abounded in her vocabulary. She once told reporters that she planned to attend a fancy masquerade ball dressed in the "garbage of a nun." Entrepreneurs or not, such individuals as Gates and Leiter played for high stakes, and their dealings were sometimes hidden behind such interlocking directorates that union leaders were sometimes forced to bargain in the chilly confines of some LaSalle Street bank or in the Union Trust Bank at Pittsburgh. One small Gillespie mine, "The Little Dog," was once owned by the Lehmann Corporation, whose most famous public outcropping was Herbert Lehmann, a New Dealer and one-time governor of New York. Lehmann's liberal viewpoints did not serve to drastically alter or improve the conditions of men who worked that mine.[10]

So rapid was the economic growth in both Macoupin and Montgomery counties after 1900 that the McKinley enterprises, which were based in the east, built a so-called "interurban railroad" from Danville to Champaign and thence to St. Louis. The track for what was jokingly called "the Toonerville trolley" ran straight down the main street of Gillespie which, by the mid-twenties, had become the largest town in the county. Over in Montgomery County, small settlements were absorbed by bigger towns. The town of Witt, for instance, grew so rapidly after 1900 that it overran the nearby English settlement of Paisley.

All of the mining towns in the two counties grew rapidly, and all seemed to develop characteristics derived from the ethnic elements which predominated within them. Of course, some claims fell into the realm of myth, but it was argued that the best bootleg beer after 1925 came from Mt. Olive. The best wine and pasta, it was said, came from Benld. Because scores of English families settled in Witt, it was said that the best home cooked candies came from that town. The best scones and tea cakes were to be had in Gillespie. Seemingly

unrelated to anything in the way of ethnicity was the claim that the best baseball players came from the Nokomis area.[11]

It was into this milieu of coal and ethnic expansion that, on some day between April 4 and June 25, 1908, John Llewellyn Lewis stepped. This was the same year in which John Mitchell, the declining hero of the United Mine Workers Union, was to give his last National Union report. Why did Lewis come to Montgomery County? According to Dubovsky and Van Tine, Lewis's latest biographers, he emigrated from Iowa to Panama, Illinois, partially because of the militant unionism which pervaded the atmosphere of Montgomery and Macoupin counties. Saul Alinsky, in an adulative biography written some years earlier, makes the same claim.[12]

Lewis's brothers as well as his father also moved to Panama, and soon the family seemed to have seized control of the town. John was elected president of the U.M.W. local, Thomas became the police magistrate (some years later, he would be both the local union president and the manager of Shoal Creek No. 1), Dennie became financial secretary of the Panama local, and three others were simply labor union activists.[13]

In the autumn of 1909, almost all of the male population of the northern Illinois town of Cherry was wiped out in a terrible mine disaster. Through the efforts of John Walker, then the leader of District 12 (which included Illinois), John L. Lewis was given the special task of lobbying for more stringent mine safety laws in Springfield. In a sense, he never went back to Panama. Mine safety laws were radically improved, probably due less to Lewis' efforts than to the public hue and outcry over the Cherry disaster. Whatever the reasons, the miners of District 12 took the position that by being militant, by not backing down an inch, they could annually improve their financial and working conditions. Lewis rode the tide, and by 1919, he had put himself into a position which brought him the acting presidency of the national union.[14]

Through the decade of the 1920's, the major problem for union coal miners in northern fields was the tremendous growth in the production of nonunion coal in Kentucky and Appalachia. With such cheap coal as a weapon, northern producers sought to reduce gains made previously among unionized miners by attempting to lower wages in the northern mines. Although Lewis argued the principle of "not one step backward," the reality of nonunion coal production was something else. In 1928, just prior to the onset of the Great Depression, affairs had reached such a sorry state among mines operating under United Mine Workers contracts that Lewis sent out a call of almost appalling desperation. Every district for itself, he told his workers: each was free to make its own contract.

There had been strikes during the 1920's in Illinois, but in

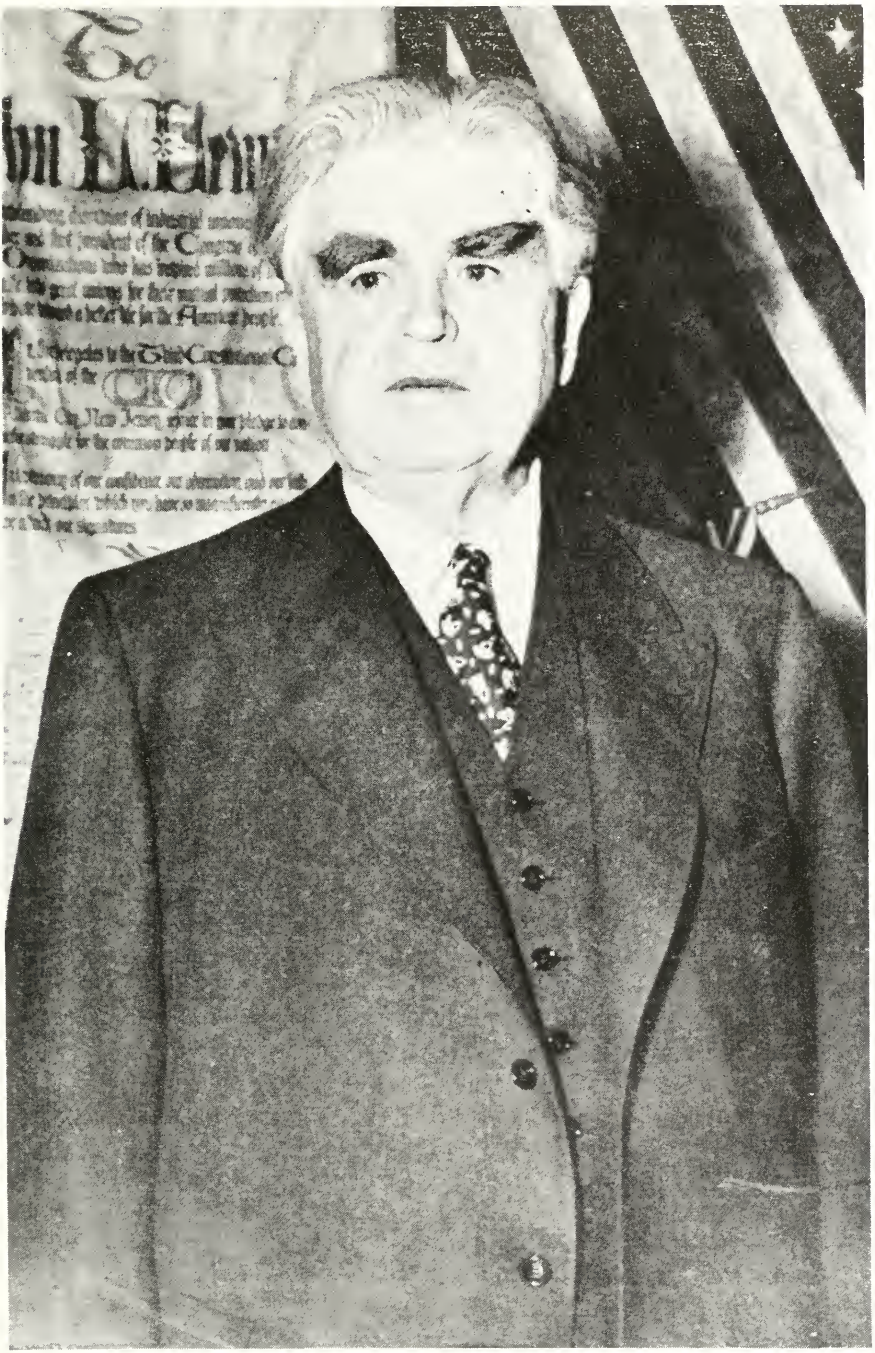
general, conditions had been fairly good. Irving Bernstein, in his *History of the American Worker, 1920-1933,* writes that local papers in southern Illinois, and in Franklin and Williamson counties in particular, had been filled with advertisements for radios, coats, and even books. Whatever strikes had occurred (and in District 12, there had never been any hesitancy about calling them) had been relatively painless. Once in a while, District 12 miners had "wildcatted" strikes over such simple issues that it appeared as if they really wanted to have a day off. But 1928 was something else indeed, and in the end, even District 12 was forced into a contract which lowered daily wages from $7.50 to $6.10 a day.

The touchiness of miners in District 12 did have tangible effects, however. The pay reduction there was considerably less than in other mining areas of the nation. Still, to the 50,000 miners in District 12, Lewis's willingness to submit to reductions seemed tantamount to abject surrender, and this was particularly true with respect to those who knew him best—the miners of Macoupin County. The same could not be said for miners in Montgomery County, however, for their situation was now becoming shaded by other changes. The mines of Witt had fallen into long closings, and those of Coalton and Nokomis apparently had a limited future.

Among the Macoupin County miners, it was not uncommon to hear Lewis now being referred to as a "crook," and there were rumors that he lived in almost baronial splendor. The last was not entirely true, but miners who took their families to Springfield on the electric railroad almost always made a pilgrimage by the Lewis home, a large sturdy structure which was certainly beyond anything which they might ever own. Such mutterings were increased when Lewis, as the President of the United Mine Workers, got into a deadly quarrel with the president of District 12, Frank Farrington. The latter had dared to challenge Lewis's authority and his power as well, the result being that Lewis unloaded on his enemy with such deadly precision that no one could err in naming him the biggest boy in the block.

While the quarrel between Farrington and Lewis was at its height, the former was persuaded to take a trip to Europe. Within days after the departure of the ship, Lewis released his most deadly missile. It was the revelation that Farrington, while president of District 12, had also signed on with the Peabody Coal Company as its "public relations expert" at an annual salary of $25,000. Peabody was a dirty name to many Illinois miners, and Farrington's deception was incredible in view of the fact that District 12 miners had just seen their wages lowered in the contract of 1928.[15]

When, in 1928, Lewis told his districts to pull in their wagons and to defend themselves, it was only a hint of the misery to come.



John L. Lewis, about 1940.

In the following year, with the onset of the Great Depression, coal fields in general, with the exception of those in central Illinois, became remnants of what they had been. The economic malaise quickly metastasized into a broad cancer. In Little Egypt, Sesser's three mines were closed, and so were Benton's four. Johnson City soon had eight abandoned mines. Within ten years, in the three counties of Franklin, Williamson, and Saline, there would be a total of 109 abandoned mines.

The growth of nonunion coal had a certain effect on mines around Witt and Hillsboro in Montgomery County, and this, plus the ordinary militancy of miners in Macoupin County, heightened the unrest of miners in those two counties over the seeming lack of leadership in the United Mine Workers itself. After all, as has been stressed before, if Lewis was known at all by the rank and file of his union, it would be by the workers in Macoupin and Montgomery Counties. While miners had taken wage decreases in both 1928 and 1929, Lewis's salary had more than doubled. The president now owned a prosperous bank, he traded successfully in the market, and it was said of him that he was making more money than smaller operators. Miners in Macoupin County especially would have agreed with Lewis's most recent biographers that, by 1929 and 1930, he had become "very much a man of the American 1920's."[16]

By March, 1930, with the movement centering in Macoupin, Montgomery, and Christian counties, District 12 was in revolt against Lewis. An attempt was made to run the venerable John Walker against Lewis, but this was quickly nipped in the bud when Lewis preemptively ruled Walker constitutionally ineligible. Lewis' opposition was a mixed bag of dedicated unionists and radicals. One should not discount the latter, especially in Macoupin County. In the election of 1920, for instance, there was no Communist Party listed on Illinois ballots, but the Socialist and Socialist-Labor candidates won 1,291 votes in that county. Compared to a non-coal county such as Adams, the difference was remarkable. Larger in population than Macoupin, Adams County gave 404 votes to both of the radical candidates.

Four years later, in 1924, with the Progressive Party, Socialist-Labor Party, and Workers' Party (Communist) candidates on the ballots, Macoupin County tallied 6,959 votes for the first, thirty-two for the second, and seventy-seven for the last. Once again, this far exceeded the Adams County votes for the candidates of those three parties.

The Communist vote in Macoupin went up by four in 1928, but in 1932 the results were more interesting. Norman Thomas received 1,567 votes, the Socialist-Labor candidate won fifty-one votes, and the Communist candidate received 134 votes. The Lemke-O'Brien

Union Party ticket was to affect the 1936 election, drawing 950 votes in Macoupin County, but a study of the Socialist Party vote in that election is revealing. There was no Communist candidate, and one may assume that votes ordinarily going in that direction would be cast for the venerable Norman Thomas. Thomas did well in three areas in Macoupin: in Benld, in Gillespie, where he received his largest support, and in one of the Dorchester precincts. Dorchester itself is a little farming village, but it does have one precinct which covers the Wilsonville area, where Superior Mine No. 4 is located. There Thomas got forty votes which, by calculation, amounts to almost three times the number which the candidate received in the five precincts of Carlinville, the county seat.[17]

All of these factors—the Lewis-Farrington controversy; the basic radicalism of Macoupin miners as opposed to Lewis, the "man of the twenties;" the worsening conditions of the miners—would have profound effects upon the dramatic episodes which were to occur in 1932. In that year, the four-year contract between District 12 miners and the operators was drawing to an end. By March 31, almost all of the District 12 workers had left the pits due to the failure to bring negotiations to a close. Finally, on July 9, a new contract was announced, and although many miners may have resigned to losing ground in terms of annual income, the extent to which they were expected to give way was shocking. The basic daily wage scale on the previous contract was $6.10; the new contract was to lower this to $5.00. When the contract was submitted to miners for their approval, they angrily turned it down by a majority of more than two to one.

Within days a second proposal, which called for essentially the same agreement, was again submitted to the miners. Lewis, by now the international president of the U.M.W.A., ranged through the state, although mostly in the fairly safe districts. He pleaded for acceptance of the contract. The unfortunate and still highly respected District 12 president, John H. Walker, was given the onerous task of selling the agreement to the more militant miners. His appearance in Gillespie was disastrous, and it nearly erupted into personal violence against himself.

The meeting in that town was scheduled at an unused movie theater. Hours before the appointed time, miners began to come into town from outlying villages such as Eagerville, Mt. Clare, Sawyerville, and Wilsonville. The more outspoken opponents to the new contract occupied the front seats in the old building, and as Walker began his attempt to sell the contract to the miners, one by one they leaped to their feet. They would not go gently into that good night as lackeys or minions who would sell their right to a fair living. As the house rocked with applause from the angry audience, the poorly constructed old movie house almost seemed to self destruct. Chunks

of plaster fell from the ceiling upon those seated below; not small pieces drifting through unmoving wisps of pipe smoke, but yardwide flat pieces which fell noisily on both people and seats below. Walker, veteran to mine militancy that he was, soon cut short his effort and quickly left town.[18]

The vote upon the second contract took place on August 6. The early pronouncements of Lewis' immediate subordinates indicated that, despite all evidence to the contrary, the referendum had carried in favor of the contract. Before any affirmation of the tally sheets could be made, the news suddenly broke that all of the sheets had been stolen. Evidence that the thieves had been high officers in District 12 was open and clear—a crime compounded by Lewis himself a few days later when he peremptorily announced that, because the sheets had disappeared, he was ordering miners to accept the terms of the new contract.

It was soon obvious that opposition to the skullduggery of the leadership of District 12 was strongest in Macoupin County. There, in Benld, on August 14, rank and file miners held a meeting to determine the action to be taken against mines elsewhere which were in obeisance to Lewis's order. There was particular bitterness against Christian County miners who were answering the call of the Peabody Coal Company to resume work. The Benld decision was that miners should procede to the Taylorville area and that they should picket working mines in that county. By August 19 there were some 1,500 miners, most of them from Macoupin County, enroute to Taylorville. Their efforts were quickly successful; the Christian County miners refused to cross picket lines.

Temporarily successful in this effort, the attention of the Macoupin County miners now turned to southern Illinois, where miners of Franklin County had returned to work under the terms of the new contract. In Little Egypt, conditions were of a much different nature. Earlier picket lines had been dispersed by questionable tactics on the part of county law authorities. One picket had been murdered, and many of the workers in that area were anxious to return to work lest their places of employment be permanently closed.

Still, the union leaders in the Gillespie and Benld area made plans for a huge picketing demonstration, announcing that no miners would be armed, and that the parade of autos into southern Illinois was to be well organized and peaceful. Some 10,000 miners left the Staunton area, the tunes of the local municipal band ringing in their ears.

The circumstances of what soon came to be known as the "Battle of Mulkeytown" seem clearly to have been a result of collaboration between the sheriff of Franklin County, state police who directed

the caravan into an ambush, and militant Lewis followers among the local miners. Hundreds of high school boys, coal miners, and businessmen were deputized by the Franklin County sheriff, as well as two physicians who were told to treat only Franklin County people among the expected casualties.

When the head of the vast cavalcade reached U.S. Highway 51 south of DuQuoin, the state police shunted the leading cars eastward on State Highway 14. When the leading cars crossed the Little Muddy River, a short distance from the village of Mulkeytown, the sheriff's deputies suddenly appeared ahead. Shots were fired, men were beaten, cars were pushed over, and tires were punctured. It was hardly a melee, much less a battle. There was no contest, for only one side was armed. The great caravan turned around, and headed northward. Five of the would-be picketers were casualties; none of the sheriff's deputies had been wounded.[19]

With miners in southern Illinois working in the pits at the reduced wages, and a crumbling situation in the Peabody mines in Christian County, the militant miners now called a convention for September 1, 1932. Meeting in Gillespie and in the old Colonial Theater, which had shook at the rejection of John H. Walker's midsummer plea to accept the new contract, the convention recommended the organization of a new union to be called the Progressive Miners of America. Its acting president, later to be its regular president, was a working miner, Claude Pearcy of Gillespie. How odd it would seem to some miners later when they realized that Pearcy, a decent and intelligent man, had been born in Lucas, Iowa, the birthplace of John L. Lewis, and that only eight years separated them in age.[20]

While it may be true that, as some writers claim, the Progressive Miners of America (later the Progressive Mine Workers of America) were made up of pure militants, Communists, Musteites, Ku Klux Klanners, opportunists, and worse, whatever can be said in this respect can be repeated in turn for their opponents, the United Mine Workers. The 1930's, at least the years following the establishment of a second mine union, were filled with violence wherever and whenever the two unions came into conflict over control. While this was not so much true of Montgomery County because its coal mining days were temporarily ended, or in Macoupin County, in which almost everyone was a Progressive, it was true in southern Illinois and in Christian County. The Progressives (called "Proggies" by the United Mine Workers) did bargain into a slightly better contract, which added both advantages and woes to the new union. Operators, such as Peabody in Christian County, managed to obtain state militia protection from picketing, and simply refused to consider the more costly Progressive contract. In southern Illinois, whenever miners

were taken with the "Progressive disease," they were often summarily fired.

Men died on both sides. Strikers were shot by national guardsmen, fights between scores of men were everyday occurrences in 1933 and 1934, and even the members of the Progressive Mine Workers Womens' Auxiliary were assaulted in Franklin County. This last organization, headed by Agnes Burns Wieck of Belleville, was no less militant in it activities than the union itself.[21]

A major problem of the Progressives was in obtaining recognition by the National Labor Relations Board, over which Lewis exercised so much influence. It was a particularly damaging situation, for any disputes involving discrimination against miners with Progressive affiliations had no hearing. President Pearcy of the Progressives attempted to rid the union of its red-tainted officers, in one instance firing the editor of the union newspaper, Gerry Allard. Lewis' stranglehold on the Department of Labor and his heavy contributions to the Democratic Party delayed National Labor Relations Board considerations of Progressive claims until midsummer of 1937. The recognition of the P.M.W.A. by the Board came after President Roosevelt's second inauguration and may have had some relationship to the quarrel which was soon to take place between the President and Lewis.

Though the issue of radical militancy had died along with the closing coal mines of Montgomery County, it remained a vital factor in yearly developments in the 1930's in Macoupin County. In 1937, over what seems to have been a slight grievance in Superior Mine No. 4 in Wilsonville, miners there refused to come topside at the close of the day's operations. It was the first so-called sitdown strike to be conducted in a coal mine, and it lasted very nearly a week.[22]

And the union itself continued to have troubles. In 1939, two of its organizers were suspended on the charges of having proselyted for causes and principles adverse to the aims and aspirations of the union as a whole. Even at this date, some forty-one years later, it is dangerous to state just why the two men were punished. One may suspect at some risk that the two individuals were advocating principles so far to the left that even union officials could not support them.[23]

With virtually all of the old mines of Macoupin and Montgomery closed in 1980, one can now summarize the contributions of the two counties in terms of radical unionism and workers' militancy. There was the violence in the Mt. Olive coal field in the early 1890's and the Virden-Pana battle of 1898. John L. Lewis emerged in Montgomery County after 1908. He rose to leadership of the United Mine Workers and, with his friend Allan Haywood, once of Witt in Montgomery County, later organized the Committee of Industrial

Organization in the 1930's. There was the peculiar "General" Bradley of Mt. Olive, and the famous "Mother" Jones who would be buried there. The latter not only helped to organize the International Workers of the World, the I.W.W. or the "wobblies," but she had some kind of a mysterious hand in the workings of the Mexican Revolution in 1915. And for Mother Jones' connoisseurs (she seems to have been rediscovered of late), there is even a radical feminist magazine published today in San Francisco. Called simply *Mother Jones,* its recent Christmas issue carried an artist's illustration of Mother Jones in a Santa Claus suit, with the notion that the leading article inside was entitled "Happy Hell Raising." Then there was the violence of the anti-Lewis movement and the organization of the Progressive Mine Workers of America. Forty-eight years after its founding, the union still exists, although it would be difficult to enumerate its membership.

Through it all, was there anything in the way of contradiction, anything in the way of anomaly? John L. Lewis came to work in Panama in 1908. One year earlier, Louis Kenneth Eilers was born in Gillespie. The first became a great union leader, the second the president of the Eastman-Kodak Company. Allan Haywood emigrated from England to Witt in Montgomery County, though his stay there was brief. Haywood eventually became a high official in the C.I.O. and in the United Automobile Workers of America. Leslie Berry Worthington was also born in England. He was brought to Witt by his family at about the same time Haywood arrived there from what was called the "old country." Worthington, like Eilers, had a long career in the business world, eventually becoming the president of U.S. Steel. Were they all examples of the way that was in the free-wheeling America of seventy years ago? Or were their successes, all of them, the results of the electric social climate of the coal fields of Macoupin and Montgomery counties?[24]

NOTES

[1] Garland's dissection of farm life is found in his *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891). Riis wrote *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), a powerful indictment of social disparity in New York City.

[2] John Keiser, *Building for the Centuries: Illinois, 1865 to 1898* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1977), pp. 12-13. Many of the early St. Clair County miners were active in the National Progressive Union of Miners and Mine Laborers, an affiliation of the Knights of Labor. The original charter for Local Union No. 644, District 6 (Hillsboro, Ill.) was, for many years, displayed on the wall of Room 508, Ridgely Bank Building, Springfield, Ill. See Dallas M. Young, "A History of the Progressive Miners of America, 1932-1940," Diss. University of Illinois 1942, p. 9.

[3] *The Area News* (Gillespie, Illinois) 22 Aug. 1980, section 2, p. 1, and Melvyn Dubovsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Club, 1977), p. 21.

[4] My own recollections. As to the importance of the British in the American labor movement, consider Sam Gompers, a London-born Jew and the leader of the American Federation of Labor for decades; Philip Murray, a Scot and important labor leader in the 1930s; John Mitchell, American born of a Scottish mother, and early leader of the United Mine Workers of America; Allan Haywood, an Englishman and 1930s' leader of the C.I.O.; and John Brophy, Lancashire-born coal union leader in the West Virginia fields.

[5] Keiser, *Building for the Centuries,* pp. 246-47. See also: John Keiser, "The Union Miners Cemetery at Mt. Olive, Illinois—A Spirit-Thread of Labor History," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,* 62 (1969), 229-66. Keiser gives a fine portrait of Bradley, who was born in England in 1866, brought to Collinsville in 1873 by his family, and later settled in Mt. Olive.

[6] Victor Hicken, "The Virden and Pana Mine Wars of 1898," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,* 52 (1959), 264-66. The quote by Lloyd is from his book, *A Strike of Millionaires against Miners* (Chicago: n.p., 1890), p. 10.

[7] Hicken, "The Virden and Pana Mine Wars," pp. 265-78; also Keiser, "The Union Miners Cemetery at Mt. Olive, Illinois, pp. 243-50.

[8] Ibid. p. 251. Dale Fetherling, *Mother Jones: The Miners' Angel* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1974), p. 16.

[9] *The Area News,* section 2, p. 1. Also, tally sheets from the 1936 election, copy forwarded by Philip Brown, Macoupin County Clerk. The 1936 election, the only one close to the 1931 depression for which tally sheets are still available in the County Clerk's Office, shows forty-seven Socialist and Socialist-Labor votes for Wilsonville. Carlinville, the county seat, had only fourteen in the same categories. There was no Communist presidential candidate listed for Illinois in 1936.

[10] McAlister Coleman, *Men and Coal* (New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1969), p. 76. In so far as working conditions in the coal mines were concerned, it should be remembered that the official figure for deaths from pit accidents since 1900 is 102,968. Some 3,242 miners died in 1907 alone. These figures do not include deaths from slow but relentness black lung disease which, in 1975, was accounting for between 4,000 and 5,000 deaths among old miners. See the *Chicago Tribune,* 12 Mar. 1980, p. 10.

[11] Nokomis produced two baseball Hall of Famers: Charles "Red" Rushing of the Yankees, and Jim Bottomley of the Cardinals. Rushing lost part of a foot while working as a miner but it did not hinder him from winning 273 games from 1924 to 1947.

[12] Dubovsky and Van Tine, p. 20. Saul Alinsky, *John L. Lewis: An Unauthorized Biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), p. 21. Alinsky's glosses over almost everything in Lewis's life which might have been ethically questionable.

[13] Dubovsky and Van Tine, pp. 56-57.

[14] Irving Bernstein, *A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933: The Lean Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), pp. 362-74.

[15] Ibid., pp. 360-69, and Coleman, p. 138. I also draw upon my own memory for some of the impressions Macoupin County miners had of John L. Lewis.

[16] Bernstein, pp. 362-65; Coleman, pp. 142-43. As for Lewis's 1920's financial dealings, see Dubovsky and Van Tine, p. 150.

[17] Most of these figures come from the *Illinois Blue Book,* an annual publication of the State of Illinois concerning the state. Phil Brown, County Clerk, Macoupin County gave me a copy of the 1936 vote tallies. It is interesting to note that Jennie Lee, the wife of British Labor Socialist Aneurin Bevan, made several visits to Gillespie during the 1930's. Not only was it the Scots settlement which drew her there, but the radical coloration of the mining population as well.

It might be noted here that in 1976 there were seventy-four Macoupin County votes for

the Communist candidate, five for the Socialist-Labor, and seven for the Socialist. Adams County, by comparison, tallied twenty-five Communist, eight Socialist-Labor, and twelve Socialist votes.

[18] Bernstein, pp. 370-77. I was present in the old Colonial Theater when Walker spoke.

[19] The events of summer, 1932, are described in Dallas Young's Ph.D. dissertation, pp. 49-95; Bernstein, pp. 370-77; Dubovsky and Van Tine, pp. 163-77; and Coleman, pp. 140-42.

[20] Young, p. 113. I saw Mr. Pearcy often. I also attended school with his children.

[21] Ibid., p. 117. Through the summers of 1932 and 1933 there were countless rallies and picnics throughout the area in support of the Progressive cause. The "women's auxilliary" was always present. I have in my memorabilia a clipping which describes a rally on the farm of Bill Hicken at Witt. The article ends: "Every one was tired and weary but well pleased at having been present to take part in such an enjoyable outing."

[22] "Sit Down Strike Continues," *St. Louis Star-Times,* 25 May 1937, p. 1.

[23] Young, p. 184, gives no hint as to why the two men were suspended. I have my own opinions, having been acquainted with one of them. Dubovsky and Van Tine, p. 170, state that the Progressives were an admixture of Communists and Musteites, Ku Klux Klanners, opportunists, and pie-card artists. I have no idea what a pie-card artist is, but the term Musteite was applied to any radical who espoused the ideas taught at the Brookwood Labor College in New York state.

[24] My parents knew the Haywood family well. I also knew the families of Leslie Worthington and Louis Eilers.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

An outstanding local history collection was recently added to the expanding resources of Western Illinois University Library. Entitled the Gordon-Vestal Collection, it was acquired from Donald Gordon of Hamilton, Illinois, approximately a year ago. Originally gathered by his father, John A. Gordon, and his sister, Pearl Gordon Vestal, it contains a vast assortment of scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, typescripts, photographs, and notes related to Hancock County. A lengthy finding aid has been prepared by the Archives and Special Collections unit of the library, and it includes the following subjects, among others: marriages, obituaries, organizations, towns, the Gordon family, Hamilton business and cultural activities, cemeteries, court houses, trails, doctors, the Mississippi River, railroads, the Civil War, the Black Hawk War, newspapers, and notable figures.

The Gordon-Vestal Collection is part of the Center for Hancock County History, which includes collections devoted to such figures as John Hay and Thomas Gregg, as well as the papers of Ida Blum, Mary Siegfried, and other local historians. Undoubtedly, the Center will prove invaluable for anyone interested in researching Hancock County history.

University Library at WIU was also the recipient of various gifts over the past six months. One of the most interesting is a large mural painted by Harold Kee Welch of Smithfield, which was given to the Library through the generosity of the First National Bank of Springfield. Each of the several panels is ten by sixteen feet, and together they portray the history of the state in the manner of the great Mexican muralists of the earlier twentieth century. Other gifts include items for the Center for Regional Authors: books by Pittsfield novelist Margery Eatock; manuscripts, letters, tapes, and newspaper clippings by and about Galesburg author Martin Litvin, and chapbooks by Springfield poets Marie and Marguerite Rickert. Of significance to those interested in the wildlife of western Illinois is the Elton Fawks Collection, which includes extensive observation notes about eagles and hawks that were made over many years.

For the Record, the newsletter of the Illinois State Archives, has printed its latest list of acquisitions to the Illinois Regional Archives

System. It notes that Western Illinois University has been the recipient of a number of acquisitions from Calhoun and Rock Island counties, including auditors' sales books, surveyors' records, probate records, will records, and other worthwhile items.

One of the more successful efforts at combining the arts and history occurred this summer at Argyle State Park, near Colchester. With grant money provided for the project, Jared Brown of Western's Theatre Department and his wife, Judy, wrote and produced a play entitled "The Peddlar." The historical advisor for the project was Dr. Victor Hicken of Western's History Department.

The short play opened with music from the settlement period of Illinois and proceeded into a story of hardship and struggle on the frontier. Performed in front of the park's "log cabin," the play drew an increasing number of viewers through each of its three performances. All in all, perhaps over 1200 people saw the show. There is now some effort to make this sort of project an annual affair at the park, but of course, any success along this line would depend upon acquiring more grant money.

Local history groups are active all over western Illinois. The Heritage Room of the Schuyler County Jail Museum received twelve new microfilms on Brown County, dating from January, 1881 to June, 1908. The museum also received items of interest from the Paul G. Brines Drug Store of Rushville.

The Western Illinois University Museum was able to acquire old style dental equipment and furniture from Dr. C. D. Eshleman of Macomb. Dr. Eshleman came to that town approximately sixty years ago, and many of his donations were from that period.

The *Museum Newsletter,* a sprightly publication, recently carried a piece on area museums and their struggle to survive. The Henderson County Museum, located in Raritan Township, includes displays of household furniture, farm implements, blacksmith's bellows, wood whittlings, and a rug made from the skin of a 1,700 pound Alaskan brown bear.

Warren County's museum, also discussed in the newsletter, is located in the old high school building at Roseville. Much work by local citizens was put into this place, and it now contains old machinery, plows, books and Bibles, uniforms from the Civil and Spanish-American Wars, antique office furniture, and a living room from the early 1900's.

The Kibbe Museum, located at Carthage, was given to the city by the late Dr. Alice Kibbe, who was once on the faculty of Carthage College. The house, built in 1869, contains oil canvases by George Upp of Hancock County, Lincoln artifacts, medical and dental instruments, stuffed birds, geodes, pianos, and other items.

Two important reprints are now available. The *Portrait and*

Biography Album of Warren County, Illinois, originally issued in 1886, is now for sale at the Carlberg Printing Company in Roseville and at the Carwile Paint Store in Monmouth. The 1885 *History of McDonough County,* which contains some 1,100 biographical sketches of early settlers in the county, is now available from Glen Sticklen, 416 S. Campbell, Macomb, Illinois 61455.

A brother of Glen Sticklen, Mr. Harry Sticklen of Macomb, is responsible for another of the frequent revelations about local history to which this writer is subjected. In all truth, if someone had asked me to identify one Amer Mills Stocking a month or so ago, I could not have done so. Actually, Amer Mills Stocking was a writer of sorts, and in 1926, he produced a book of some historical interest entitled *The Saukie Indians and Their Great Chiefs Black Hawk and Keokuk.* The volume was published by the Vaile Company of Rock Island, and indeed, it is a strange affair. Replete with photographs, the text is written in a kind of verse (somewhere in that broad field between Longfellow and Edgar A. Guest). Pictures and poetry go along for some 266 pages and are followed by notes to the text. Stocking is also listed on the title page under the name "Samp-we-te-oh," or "He who deals fairly." Even more oddly, the books contain an introduction by Alice French, a Davenport novelist who obtained a certain fame by writing under the pen name of Octave Thanet.

Genealogical societies are among the most active organizations in preserving the past. The Genealogical Society of McDonough County recently published "Will Book Abstracts, 1834 to 1857, McDonough County." I have looked at the publication and find it quite interesting. The same group recently heard a talk by Dean Albaugh, a graduate student at Western Illinois University. Albaugh discussed his masters thesis, "Minor League Baseball in Macomb During 1908 and 1910." The Macomb team was known as the "Potters" (we cannot resist asking whether they had a field), and its very first game was with the visiting Hannibal nine.

I have long been interested in the history of baseball in western Illinois. For this reason I was fascinated with the fact that the old time pitcher, Grover Cleveland Alexander, hurled against the Macomb team during its short stint in the lesser leagues. Alexander, as any baseball trivia expert should know, went on to a long career in the National League and to a final recognition of greatness with his installation in the Cooperstown, N.Y., Baseball Hall of Fame. Alexander's greatest moment came in the 1926 World Series when he struck out Yankee Tony Lazzeri with the bases loaded.

The New York Times, May 4, 1980, devoted part of its Sunday travel section to the attractions of Hannibal, Missouri. The piece was written by Tom Weil, a Missouri novelist, and it covered the majesty

of Cardiff Hill, the lure of the wooden fence ("Does a boy get to whitewash a fence every day?" Tom Sawyer asked), and the Twain home. Weil included an interview with the last surviving Hannibal resident to have met Twain. The year was 1902, the occasion of the novelist's last visit to the town. Now 87 years of age, Helen Knighton still lives within sight of Rockcliffe, where she grew up so many years ago.

I have in hand *The Weekend Book: A Guide to Small Adventures in Illinois,* printed and distributed by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. It is a listing of places and events which one might visit throughout the year in Illinois. In western Illinois, the Hotel Nauvoo and the Hillsboro Hotel are commended as inns, and particular attention is given to the Gem City Vineland Company, a winery at Nauvoo. Special events are listed for each month of the year—for example, the Jordbruksdagarna at Bishop Hill, the Spoon River Festival, and the Knox County Festival, all of which occur in October. It is a useful book, and the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs must be praised for doing such a marvelous job of printing and distribution.

Victor Hicken
Western Illinois University

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

A. LINCOLN: THE CRUCIBLE OF CONGRESS. By Paul Findley. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1979. Pp. xvii, 270. $14.95.

Paul Findley attacks two "myths" in this study of Lincoln's sole excursion into national government before his election to the Presidency in 1860: that Lincoln was a failure as a Congressman; and that he committed "political suicide" by opposing the Mexican War. Findley's purpose is "to set the record straight and promote a better understanding of Lincoln the Congressman."

Although it is hardly true that, as the dust-jacket proclaims, Lincoln's single term in Congress "has been buried in undeserved oblivion," it is clear that his service in the Thirtieth Congress has not been treated in the kind of depth that has characterized virtually every other aspect of Lincoln's life. Lincoln's two years in the House of Representatives, as Findley points out, did nonetheless provide an important episode in his developing career, contributing valuable experience and national exposure to his political ambition. The years, he suggests, were significant not so much for what Lincoln did for Congress as for what the Congressional experience did for Lincoln. Findley makes passing reference to Donald Riddle's work on Lincoln's term in Congress but finds some of its conclusions unconvincing (in fact, Riddle is given rather short-shrift). He also acknowledges Gabor Boritt's article on Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War (1974) as providing important inspiration to his own work (Findley might have found Mark Neeley's incisive analysis of Lincoln's opposition to the war even more valuable).

There is little that is new in Findley's study. Its value lies rather in the unique qualifications which he brings to his task. Findley, a journalist by profession and a life-long resident of western Illinois, is himself a member of the House of Representatives. For the past nineteen years he has represented the Illinois district that includes Sangamon County, the heart of Lincoln's own district in the late eighteen-forties. Findley's own experience as a Congressman adds flavor and insight to his discussion of Lincoln's legislative role. Indeed, one of the most interesting chapters describes Lincoln's

routine as a Congressman, in which analogies are drawn between the Congress of Lincoln's time and that of today.

Findley's primary concern is with the two issues that not only disturbed Lincoln but also consumed much of the Congress' time between 1847 and 1849: slavery and the Mexican War. He insists that Lincoln's Congressional term was the turning point in his attitude toward slavery even though Lincoln, in Findley's words, was "remarkably silent" on the issue. More important than his exposure to the slavery issue in Congress was his daily confrontation with slavery in the national capital, for until his sojourn in Washington Lincoln had never lived with slavery. Findley's view of the Mexican War follows conventional lines. He is careful to distinguish between Lincoln's opposition to the manner in which America became involved in the war and his support of the conflict once it had begun. Findley concludes that on this issue Lincoln was both a man of "deep moral convictions" and an "adept political practioner." Although an effort is made to strengthen the former characterization, the author's own evidence seems to point to the latter. Lincoln after all did not voice his opposition to the war until it was over and then simply reiterated the arguments that had been employed by Whig politicians since 1846. Lincoln apparently was most interested in demonstrating that his Whig credentials were sound. His attack on Polk reflected his party's position on the use (and misuse) of Presidential power and was couched in language reminiscent of Lincoln's Lyceum speech ten years before. The ultimate irony is that Lincoln himself, in the so-called "Presidential War" of the spring of 1861, followed the same course for which he attacked Polk in 1848. After reading this account, one cannot but agree with Ben Perley Poore's remark that Lincoln "made no mark as a legislator."

Findley does better in his effort to dispel the second myth, the oft-repeated story that Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War terminated his political career. The author traces the myth to Herndon but credits Albert Beveridge with giving it its greatest boost (because of Beveridge's own " 'manifest destiny' spirit"). Findley believes that Lincoln would have been returned to Congress had he been a candidate, primarily, one supposes, because he would have ridden into office on Zachary Taylor's coattails. Still, Findley attributes the victory of Democrat Thomas L. Harris over his Whig opponent to the "war spirit" in the district. Could not this same "war spirit" have worked against Lincoln?

While the author's focus is on Lincoln's Congressional years, his book covers much more. Lincoln's early life and career are summarized, and his growing involvement in the politics of the slavery question in the eighteen-fifties is treated. A final chapter is

devoted to the Presidential years. Special mention should be made of the copious and superb illustrations, many of which have never been published before. They constitute one of the book's special strengths. Anyone interested in Lincoln's political career will surely find this volume delightful reading.

Robert W. Johannsen
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A HISTORY OF MONMOUTH COLLEGE: THROUGH ITS FIFTH QUARTER-CENTURY. By William Urban, with Mary Crowe, Charles Speel and Samuel Thompson. Monmouth, Ill.: Monmouth College, 1979. Pp. v, 236. No price given.

Monmouth College is in the thirteenth decade of service to education in Illinois. After its establishment in 1853, the school grew rapidly both in size and influence until, by the 1880's, it had become the largest college in Illinois. From 1890 on, however, the impact of the founding of state colleges at Normal, Urbana, Charleston, DeKalb, and Macomb was a substantial one. This was particularly true in the case of Western Illinois State Normal, which began to enroll students shortly after the turn of the century. Yet, from that time to this, Monmouth College has survived, sometimes through sheer will and purpose, and sometimes through the most tenuous circumstances—but it has survived. Professor Urban, along with colleagues Crowe, Speel, and Thompson, has chronicled some of the more difficult times in a sturdy version of the institution's 125-year heritage.

College histories, especially when dealing with individuals still alive, tend to tread lightly. The writing of some volumes is often such that lines carry subtle and varied meanings. One level of meaning may be for the general public, and a second may apply to those who are really well acquainted with the history of the school. Moreover, college history is not the easiest kind of writing to do, and since that is the case, one occasionally stumbles across convoluted sentences which imply meanings that are not intended. There is a real beauty of this kind in Professor Urban's introduction to the book, where he describes the physical attributes of a young colleague and their obvious appeal to student audiences: "There was a time when all Miss Bartlett had to do to get a big class," says Urban, "was to sit on a desk and cross her legs . . ." (p. ii). Then he adds: "but later the students who wanted to see more of her came for the lively lectures and the professional quality slides."

This is not a serious gaffe, and in fact, everyone who writes extensively makes an error of this type once in a while. Of greater

significance is the variation in writing quality that characterizes the book. There are times when the author's prose is rich and of high quality, and other moments when it becomes quite pedestrian.

The strength of the book lies elsewhere, in the successful attempt to approach Monmouth College's more recent years with a degree of frankness. College presidents are very much like the little girl who had a little curl, right in the middle of her forehead. When they are good, they are very very good; but when they are bad, they are horrid. Monmouth College apparently has run the gamut of these extremes, which is not an unusual course for any institution to follow. This reviewer was quite interested in the book's treatment of the administration of President Duncan Wimpress, whose presidency began in 1964. Wimpress was a builder and, in that, he was typical of college presidents of his era. He made a serious attempt to attract students from the East and was successful to the degree that enrollment went from 977 to 1338. Unfortunately, the increase also brought problems. Many of the eastern students were unhappy and longed for the streets of Darien, or Newark, or New York. They abhored the cow town aspects of Monmouth and eventually drifted off to other places and other things. Yet, while Wimpress failed here, his efforts to increase the holdings of the college library were quite successful. The number of volumes went from 80,000 to 121,000.

Much of the same frankness is applied to the Gibson, Stine, and Freed years, and to the various other aspects of change at Monmouth College over the last few decades. All in all, the alumni of the institution will find this a helpful recounting of the past—their own past, in fact—and hopefully the book will draw their support to efforts on behalf of the college's survival.

Victor Hicken
Western Illinois University

PRAIRIE TREE: EARLY DAYS ON THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS PRAIRIE. By Frank Lewis Marsh. Vantage Press, N.Y., 1978. Pp. 304. $9.75.

Prairie Tree is an affectionate story of the original settlers of a Mercer County farm in the area commonly known as the Marsh district. Using the journal/diary kept by his grandfather, Frank Marsh is able to present many incidents in the mid-1850's as seen and experienced by the people of that time. His book offers insights into prairie farm purchases, settlement, and problems. Such firsthand accounts enable the reader to understand how hard it was to begin farming and living in western Illinois.

The story is centered around the life of young William Marsh,

who migrated to Illinois with his parents, the Mordecai Marshes, when he was twenty years old. It relates his experiences as a young man in the new community—as a helper to his father, as a young school teacher, and as a farmer on his own. The major part of the story ends in the years immediately following the Civil War, with the heaviest concentration of activity in 1853 to 1860, for in those years he taught, courted, married, and started farming. The later pages of the book quickly summarize the family from 1870 to the present time, with emphasis on their conversion to Seventh Day Adventism and the continuing of the family in its life and work in Mercer County and elsewhere.

The book is of greatest interest to the people of Mercer County and the family descendants from Mordecai, but it does provide social history for the nineteenth-century rural America historian if he wades through the superfluous. Because he is a biologist, Frank Marsh digresses from time to time into matters of plant life and animal life that are interesting but distracting.

The major shortcoming of the book is its style, which is outdated and adds difficulty to the reading. Moreover, the author has the annoying habit of referring to himself as "Frank" rather than simply saying, "I remember," or "I did this." In places the book reads easily, but for the most part it will be dull to the reader unacquainted with the Marsh family or the county.

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HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES OF HANCOCK COUNTY, ILLINOIS. Prepared by the Historic Sites Committee. Carthage, Ill.: Hancock County Historical Society Bicentennial Commision, 1979. Pp. xvi, 432. $20.00

REMNANTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY LANDSCAPE: KNOX COUNTY, ILLINOIS. By Richard C. Welge. Knoxville, Ill.: Knox County Historical Sites, Inc., 1979. Pp. 96. $5.00.

Two books have appeared within the last year which add greatly to our understanding and appreciation of Western Illinois' past. Profusely illustrated, *Historic Sites and Structures of Hancock County, Illinois* and *Remnants of the Nineteenth Century Landscape: Knox County, Illinois* are worthy additions to the literature on this region's culture. Both are products of broad support by local citizens interested in history and preservation, with the first having been entirely created through a group effort. They feature the man-made structures of our environment, yet they compliment each other in approach and emphasis. *Historic Sites and*

Structures aims to "strengthen the readers' appreciation of the toil and dedication of our grandparents" (p. ix), while *Remnants of the Nineteenth Century Landscape* wants to "inspire people . . . to look at their own home towns with new interest and pride" (p. 6).

The format and the content of the two volumes fit their stated purposes. *Historic Sites and Structures* contains hundreds of photographs accompanied by brief historical explanations, while *Remnants of the Nineteenth Century Landscape* is a beautifully illustrated essay on local architecture. The illustrations differ accordingly. The Hancock County book consists of historical and contemporary photographs which feature a cross section of the county's buildings, with heavy emphasis on rural schools, churches and stores. Welge's book, on the other hand, is a carefully chosen collection of superb photographs designed to illustrate architectural trends as they left their mark on Knox County structures. The former is an encyclopedic listing of sites, some of which do not exist any more, while the latter is a visual survey of buildings that have survived into the present. Furthermore, the Hancock County volume is offered as an appendix and sequel to the Illinois sesquicentennial history of the county. Welge's book stands on its own. Consequently, *Historic Sites and Structures* abounds in details of location, name changes, and important dates, and the photographs feature, to a large extent, ordinary buildings. Welge, on the other hand, takes a broad view of the history and architecture of Knox County and tends to emphasize substantial buildings and a somewhat gilded way of life.

Historic Sites and Structures is a comprehensive source book for the study of local history. It appears to be accurate and most useful because of the inclusion of good maps which pinpoint the location of sites. Its main draw-back is that some photographs, both historical and contemporary, did not reproduce well, and thus some visual information is lost. On the other hand, *Remnants of the Nineteenth Century Landscape* is a beautifully executed work designed to educate the public in the why's and wherefore's of historic preservation.

Both of these fine volumes contain many previously unpublished photographs and new information. They are layman-oriented but include valuable data for scholarly research in the fields of local history, geography, and architecture.

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